

ALEXIAD

(AΛΞΙΑΔ)

\$2.00

I emailed the Saddlebred association about fatal injuries to Saddlebreds. They answered that their horses didn't break down. I found this hard to believe so I did a websearch for fatal injuries to Saddlebreds. What popped up were three pages of listings of the equine version of sprained ankles. Only at the end of the third page of listings did I find the death of a Saddlebred. It was the attack on Wild-Eyed and Wicked and his companions, which certainly cannot be blamed on anything that happened during competition. By comparison, I did a websearch on Thoroughbreds. A whole string of fatal injuries popped up. I'm still not sure I believe the Saddlebred claim. I would very much like to. What is clear is that Saddlebred competition is much less harmful to the horses than Thoroughbred racing.

— Lisa

Table of Contents

Editorial	1
Reviewer's Notes	1
Awards	16
Horse Notes	11
Hugo Picks	14
Pierre Plantard and the Priory of Sion	11
<i>Prayers for the Assassin</i>	3
<i>The Wind in the Willows</i>	14
Book Reviews	
JTM Armstrong, <i>Preemptive Strike</i>	6
CRC Bujold, <i>Paladin of Souls</i>	13
JTM Butler, ed., <i>My Dear Mr. Stalin</i>	8
JTM Carey, <i>Kushiel's Scion</i>	4
JCS Hirshfeld, <i>The Electric Life of Michael Faraday</i>	13
JTM Lupoff, <i>Master of Adventure</i>	6
RD Du Maurier, <i>The Martian</i>	12
JTM Moore, <i>Bad Prince Charlie</i>	3
JTM Maund/Nanson, <i>The Four Musketeers</i>	8
JTM Novik, <i>Black Powder War</i>	5
JTM Pendle, <i>Strange Angel</i>	9
JTM Roberson, <i>Paragea</i>	5
JTM Starks/Murcutt, <i>Lost in Tibet</i>	6
JTM Stross, <i>The Clan Corporate</i>	6
JTM Szalavitz, <i>Help at Any Cost</i>	10
Candy Bar Reviews	
JC Twix White Chocolate	14
Fanzines Received	16
Random Jottings	2
Letters	17
Sheryl Birkhead, Dainis Bisenieks, Jeffrey Allan Boman, Sue Burke, Brad W. Foster, E. B. Frohvet, Alexis A. Gilliland, John Hertz, Robert S. Kennedy, Trinlay Khadro, Evelyn C. Leeper, Rodney Leighton, Lloyd Penney, AL du Pisani, George W. Price, John Purcell, Darrell Schweitzer, Steven H Silver, Joy V. Smith, Milt Stevens, Janine G. Stinson, Taral Wayne, Taras Wolansky, Martin Morse Wooster	

Trivia:	34
Art:	
Sheryl Birkhead	14, 17
Paul Gadzikowski	34
Alexis Gilliland	34
Trinlay Khadro	2

The Dormition of the Theokotos is **August 15, 2006.**

The 81st Running of the Hambletonian (1st leg of the Trotting Triple Crown) is **August 5, 2006** at Meadowlands Racetrack in East Rutherford, NJ

The 114th Running of the Kentucky Futurity (2nd leg of the Trotting Triple Crown) is **October 7, 2006** at the Red Mile in Lexington, KY

The 52nd Running of the Yonkers Trot (3rd leg of the Trotting Triple Crown) is **November 25, 2006** at Yonkers Raceway in Yonkers, NY

The 51st Running of the Cane Pace (1st leg of the Pacing Triple Crown) is **September 4, 2006** at Freehold Raceway in Freehold, NJ

The 61st Running of the Little Brown Jug (2nd leg of the Pacing Triple Crown) is **September 21, 2006** at the Delaware County Fair in Delaware, OH.

The 50th Running of the Messenger Stakes (3rd leg of the Pacing Triple Crown) is **November 5, 2006** at Yonkers Raceway.

Printed on August 9, 2006

Deadline is **October 1, 2006**

Reviewer's Notes

"Why don't teens do zines?"

Fanzines began because it was too much trouble to write the same letter a dozen times to correspondents from Maine to California. As a result, they could write through *you* instead. That was when travel was difficult; gas prices were clearly out of hand at 15¢ a gallon.

When the country picked up a little; Fans could actually go out of town to meet other Fans. <Pause for 35,751st reiteration of the quarrel over whether Leeds or Philadelphia had the first SF convention> Conventions began to grow. And then Fans had to have the other things they liked. Not to mention that other forms were far more accessible.

The result is that media cons are vast. Dragon*Con is a company serving 50,000 patrons a year. If it has anything about fanzines — like, d00dz, that's for the Livejournal chat.

In other words, there is much disussion, but it's written on the wind and just as well. How to find the good Net discussion amid "Vader could of took Q!" "That sux!" and even less literate comment.

Family has different meanings. You will recall in *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* how Toula had thirty first cousins and knew them all (though admittedly the names repeated), while Ian had two and barely knew them. Recently we went to Hickman, Kentucky, which is almost on the Mississippi, to see my cousins the Major Brothers Lynn, Mike, and Jim. After a while my and their cousin Kathy showed up. Kathy mentioned that her parents had at first meant to name her "Nancy Katherine Mabry" — *my* grandmother's name! But then, like me, like the Brothers, Kathy had a Major grandparent and a Mabry grandparent.

Lisa couldn't say a thing. We had just come from the Forrester Reunion in Union City, Tennessee — her maternal grandmother's family — with nearly a hundred people, and the Thomas-Bridges Reunion in Cadiz, Kentucky with over two hundred.

And some people don't have any family at all..

Comments are by JTM or LTM.

RANDOM JOTTINGS

by Joe



Life Imitates SF Department: Okay, so I read *People* magazine. They publish follow-ups, which other magazines have quit doing. (For example, *Newsweek* used to have a “Where Are They Now?” feature.) As it happened, the **June 26, 2006** issue had, with its articles on “Hot Bachelors”, two on people who tried living F&SF. First off, there was a guy who lived in Wal-Mart for almost two days (Page 133). But that Wal-Mart was open round the clock, which makes the sinister plots recounted in John Collier’s “Evening Primrose” (1940) harder to carry off. This was followed by a story about a man who is still an undergrad after 12 years in college (Page 134), no doubt looking for *Doorways In the Sand* (by Roger Zelazny (1975)).

Let’s see: What is the succession of the Senior Surviving Person in Space?

April 12, 1961 — March 27, 1968
Yuri Alekseyevich Gagarin
 Vostok 1 “Cedar” [Кедр (“Kedr”)]

March 27, 1968 — July 21, 1998
Alan Bartlett Shepard, Jr.
 Mercury-Redstone 3 “Freedom 7”

July 21, 1998 — September 20, 2000
Gherman Stepanovich Titov
 Vostok 2 “Eagle” [Орёл (“Oryol”)]

September 20, 2000 — present
John Herschel Glenn, Jr.
 Mercury-Atlas 6 “Friendship 7”

Who will succeed to the position when Glenn (born July 18, 1921) dies? Well, in order of flight we have:

Scott Carpenter [Malcolm S. Carpenter]
 born May 1, 1925
 Mercury-Atlas 7 “Aurora 7”

Pavel Romanovich Popovich
 born October 5, 1930
 Vostok 4 “Golden Eagle” [Беркут (“Berkut”)]

Walter Marty “Wally” Schirra

born March 12, 1923
 Mercury-Atlas 8 “Sigma 7”

Valery Fedorovich Bykovsky
 born August 4, 1934
 Vostok 5 “Hawk” [Ястреб (“Yastreb”)]

Valentina Vladimirovna Tereshkova
 born March 6, 1937
 Vostok 6 “Seagull” [Чайка (“Chayka”)]

Konstantin Petrovich Feoktiskov
 born February 7, 1926
 Voskhod 1 “Ruby” [Рубин (“Rubin”)]

Aleksei Arkhipovich Leonov
 born May 30, 1934
 Voskhod 2 “Diamond” [Алмаз (“Almaz”)]

John Watts Young
 born September 24, 1930
 Gemini 3 “Molly Brown”

James Alton McDivitt
 born June 10, 1929
 Gemini 4

Frank Frederick Borman II
 born March 14, 1928
James Arthur Lovell, Jr.
 born March 25, 1928
 Gemini 7

Thomas Patten Stafford
 born September 17, 1930
 Gemini 6A

Neil Alden Armstrong
 born August 5, 1930
David Randolph Scott
 born June 6, 1932
 Gemini 8

Educational Cartoons Department: The *Wall Street Journal* for Friday, July 14, 2006, contains this insightful phrase: “Wile E. Coyote also has much to teach about cunning, pathos, hubris and the proper handling of dynamite”. [“Smart TV” by Bret Stephens]. And as for another topic of discussion, Dora the Explorer™ doesn’t have a Backpack™ from the Acme Corporation, either. Beep-Beep!

Martin Morse Wooster has kindly pointed us to Kathleen McGowan, author of *The Expected One* (Touchstone, 2006; ISBN 0-7432-9942-6; \$25.95), a novel about the heir of line and last surviving descendant of Jesus Christ and Mary Magdalene, who by an amazing coincidence just happens to be Kathleen McGowan. Gosh!

She has — she **must** have — access to some remarkable genealogical sources. I wish I could get that, and all I want to do is trace the descendants of Archbishop Mauger and his girlfriend (he was a French cleric and at least she was female and adult).

Those of a mathematical bent should be given a vector in the direction of *The Annotated Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions* by

“A. Square” (Edwin A. Abbott), introduction and notes by Ian Stewart (Perseus Publishing; 1884, 2002; ISBN 0-7382-0541-5; \$30.00). One learns that the author may have been considered a stammerer when giving his full name, which was Edwin Abbott Abbott (middle name being mother’s maiden name). This classic explication of dimensions — think visit from a four-spatial-dimensional creature, and how it would look upon you — is now enriched with explanations of context and other in-depth discussions.

OBITS

We regret to report the death of **James Patrick “Jim” Baen**, editor and publisher, on **June 28, 2006**. Born **October 22, 1943**, Jim came into the field as editor of *Galaxy*, in succession to the undistinguished tenure of Ejler Jakobsson. He revived the magazine for a brief but shining moment, his greatest discovery being John Varley.

After leaving *Galaxy* he became an editor with Ace Books, where he produced the innovative if unfortunately unsuccessful “bookazine” *Destinies*, which continued under different titles for some time.

His principal influence, though, was as a publisher. Baen Books, the company he founded and directed until his death, actively solicited new science fictional ideas and writers, bringing many new writers into the field, a list led by Lois McMaster Bujold.

Baen entered the hospital on June 11 because of a drug interaction; he suffered the stroke there and lingered in a coma for two weeks. He is survived by two daughters.

MONARCHIST NEWS

Michel Roger Lafosse, alias “Prince Michael of Albany”, has been stripped of his British citizenship, ordered to give up his British passport, and faces deportation and fraud charges. He has fled to Belgium after putting his house in Edinburgh up for sale. After an investigation, the British Home Office concluded that Lafosse obtained British citizenship using a forged birth certificate. Couldn’t happen to a nicer chap.

The Italian Affair: Crown Prince **Vittorio Emanuele** of Italy has been arrested for providing prostitutes and slot machines to a casino, only a year after being allowed to re-enter Italy. He has resigned his claim in favor of his son, **Emanuele Filiberto, Prince of Venice**, who has dissociated himself from his father’s alleged crimes. However, their cousin **Amadeo, Duke of Aosta** has also been named “Duke of Savoy” and claimant by a body called *Consulta dei senatori del Regno*, an organization founded by Umberto II to act as Senate of Italy during the republic.

THE NIGHT OF POWER DIARIES

Commentary by Joseph T Major on

PRAYERS FOR THE ASSASSIN

by Robert Ferrigno

 (Scribner; 2006; ISBN 0-7432-7289-7;
\$24.95)

Baen Books reissued Spider Robinson's *Night of Power* (1985) last year. One can ask why.

Night of Power is one of a cluster of "Black Revolution" novels, stories about the oppressed African standing and fighting as a man, taking on Whitey and making his own country. Other works of this type include Warren Miller's *The Siege of Harlem* (1964), Edwin Corley's *Siege* (1969), and Fletcher Knebel's *Trespass* (1969). The others, you can see, took off from the black militancy of the sixties, which saw the Black Panthers as more than just a street gang with delusions of adequacy, and eventually developed to the point where it took "Soledad Brother" George Jackson's Guevaraist fantasies as plausible.

One other work, Robie MacAuley's *A Secret History of Time to Come* (1979), had such a rising. It also had said rising exterminated, and in the post-apocalyptic phase, there were no blacks surviving in America. It wasn't so good for the whites, either. (After a promising setup, a searing portrayal of mutual racism, and a nicely balanced question of reality, the novel bogged down in a standard quest for the Magic Knickknack of Qwerty and ended up with all the other characters presumably dying pointlessly and the point-of-view character wandering around aimlessly.) Such a bleak aftermath would be far too likely for that event.

More like Miller than the others, Robinson seemed to have taken that to heart. He probably wouldn't appreciate that this is the same solution, different color, prescribed in *The Turner Diaries* by "Andrew Macdonald" [William L. Pierce] (1978, 1980).

None of these works, however, seemed to take into account foreign powers. Now, normally, given their dates one could be certain that Corley's "Afro-American Liberation Army" or Robinson's charismatic conspirator Michael would have had aid from the Soviet organs of state security (i.e., the KGB and GRU, the espionage agencies). But American writers tend to act as if the world ends at the border (e.g. Thomas T. Thomas's *First Citizen* (1987), a lame adaptation of the war between Pompey and Caesar, where the U.S. breaks into chaos and no one else seems to bother).

All this reduces to an apocalyptic portrayal of an America divided by uncrossable boundaries, riven by war. Of course, it needn't be race that does that . . .

Prayers for the Assassin begins with a football game breaking for prayers. In the next few pages, Ferrigno draws a picture of an America pervaded and dominated by Islam. (For example, the times at which chapters are set go by the cycle of the daily prayers.) Not, however, the militant Islam of the banlieus of France or the neighborhoods of Denmark. This

is an Americanized Islam, one that allows some of the ways of the Era of Ignorance to continue for a time.

Ferrigno has described a nightmarish transition from here to there. It began when dirty nuclear weapons devastated New York and Washington. And Mecca. The perpetrators were speedily unmasked and confessed their crimes — they were Israeli agents, and a thorough revulsion against the Zionist Entity and all things Jewish followed.

About then, the latest cool religion hit the elites. No more Kabbalah of course, no more Scientology, no more Zen or Hari Krishna or Gaianism — it was Islam! And when Islam became the Faith of Faiths among the irreligious elites, it became more generally popular. It filled the void that sprang up when the Walden Church had to quit holding religious services because there were too many self-help meetings and political rallies using the church facilities. That new and inclusive faith didn't look kindly on backsliding, either.

But there was a new civil war. The stick-in-the-mud Christians resisted, fleeing to the Bible Belt and conducting a high-tech war against Islam. They weren't defeated, either, but restrained to the Old South. And so it stands.

Other nations exist in the former USA — a hedonistic country in Nevada, a Mormon land in Utah — and there are wildlands. But the majority of the survivors have surrendered to the faith of faiths.

It's the details. For example, the casual references to continued executions of homosexuals in San Francisco. Or the general degradation of the infrastructure.

The plot, by way of contrast, is more platitudinous. A sinister conspirator turned out to have sent very long-term penetration agents into all the infidel powers of the world. For example, at one point we find him gloating that the new Pope is his man. And similarly, the "Mossad" agents who nuked the U.S. and Mecca were the children of his agents.

This is cartoonish conspiracism, as realistic (or unrealistic) as the conspiracy in, say, *Night of Power*, or Michael F. Flynn's *In the Country of the Blind* (1990) with its super-secret, super-powerful social manipulators using societal models initially calculated by Babbage engines.

Thrillers often display a degree of action in covert operations that requires massive auctorial intervention to be feasible. The legendary and fabulous Soviet ultra-deep-penetration agents, trained at that gargantuan reservation Somewhere in the Red Empire that was as good a simulation as they could make of a good old American apple-pie small town, don't seem to have popped up now that the Soviet Union is a back number and there's big money to be made in scandalous old Cold War revelations. Maybe there never were such people; and so much for the villain's very long-term penetration agents.

The earlier similar work that comes to mind is Mike McQuay's *Jitterbug* (1997), where the al-Saud have taken control of and Islamicized the world by deploying biological weapons in every major city and depopulating most of the

countryside. How well this would work is another matter, and how they would keep the Wahabi mullahs from denouncing, for example, the surgically modified pleasure women of that story, is another matter, but it does at least give an example of the degradation entailed in such a conquest.

As has been pointed out, given the advance of Eurabia, it makes less sense to have this novel set in America per se, but one has to consider the market.

Science Fiction is often stuck on old tropes. Those looking for the trappings of "Arabian Nights" fiction — the wise old Sultan without a son, whose spunky daughter goes to the bazaar to meet a handsome and valiant but poor young man, the wicked Grand Vizer plotting to marry the princess and take power (or the virtuous Jewish Vizer who counsels the handsome and valiant but poor young man), the wise old philosopher of the market, the cheery fat old trader-woman, the cunning chief of the thieves' guild, the beautiful fair-haired belly-dancers in flimsy costumes, the spunky young thief-girl, the ruggedly handsome clean-shaven young sheikh in artfully ripped shirt revealing artfully ripped pecs who ravishes away the beautiful Christian woman in long flowing gown with long flowing hair, their two hearts beating as one — will have to go begging. *Prayers for the Assassin* is hardly as cutting-edge as it could be — presenting the culture of the madrassas and mullahs that would far more likely be the result of this Islamization of America would result in an unsalable manuscript — but it does put before the reader an uncomfortable dash of reality.

Back in the fifties, someone who qualified as an expert on Communism, having seen it from the inside, had a few meetings with Joseph McCarthy, but soon gave up on him. McCarthy adhered to a common American perception; he portrayed the International Communist Conspiracy as an organization of wicked men, led by the sinister Boss, Stalin, with a hierarchy of obedient fiendish supporters.

His would-be teacher saw it differently. Communism was an *idea*, an idea that offered much to the oppressed, an idea that had an evil at its core. The Senator would not, perhaps could not, comprehend this concept. Which was why Whittaker Chambers, more perceptive than most, feared McCarthy in some ways even more than the people of Progressive America did. He knew better.

If *Prayers for the Assassin* encourages readers to think of Islamism as an *idea*, that will be one thing. If it encourages them to look out for the conspiracy, to think of it as only a group of evil men, then . . .

COUP-COUP

Review by Joseph T Major of

BAD PRINCE CHARLIE

by John Moore

(Ace; 2006; ISBN 0-441-01396-1; \$6.99)

The imaginative epics of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were killed off by one work,

albeit a masterpiece: *El ingenioso hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha* (1605, 1615) por, er by Miguel de Cervantes y Saavedra.

Nowadays, there is an entire genre of genre-killing books; these include such works as Jack L. Chalker's *Dancing Gods* series [*The River of the Dancing Gods* (1984), *Demons of the Dancing Gods* (1984), *Vengeance of the Dancing Gods* (1988), and *Songs of the Dancing Gods* (1990)], Craig Shaw Gardner's trilogies about the greedy wizard Ebenezum [*A Malady of Magicks* (1986), *A Multitude of Monsters* (1986), and *A Night in the Netherhells* (1987)] and his naive but lucky apprentice Wuntvor [*A Difficulty with Dwarves* (1987), *An Excess of Enchantments* (1989), and *A Disagreement with Death* (1989)], Diana Wynne Jones's *Derkholm* books [*Dark Lord of Derkholm* (1998) and *Year of the Griffin* (2000)], and so on. Indeed, there is a guide to writing such stuff: Jones's *The Tough Guide to Fantasyland* (1996).

Most of these works take one of the genre attitudes one step further as it were; the characters in most processed fantasy react as modern people would, so what these writers do is to have their characters act like cynical slackers who have read a lot of processed fantasy. Some ungracious types might well say that this is a self-portrait.

John Moore's *Heroics for Beginners* (2004) was another in these works. This one is yet another such work, and one can tell that Moore is taking the attitude pretty far:

"The plague?" said Terrapin.
"Excuse my interruption, but when you speak of the plague, are you talking about . . . surely you don't mean . . ."

"Yes," said Charlie. "Coffee shops."
The thief made a noise of disgust.
"Coffee shops. They seemed to come out of nowhere, and now Noile is infected with them. And the prices. Ten pence for a tall macchiato! It's ridiculous. It's . . ."

"Highway robbery, Dick?"

— *Bad Prince Charlie*, Page 13

The titular "Bad Prince Charlie" is involved in one of those postmodern intrigues. It seems the kingdom is definitely not a going concern (Moore has a remarkably intricate reason for this, though one wonders of the people involved would be capable of such detailed climatic studies) and their only hope is a successful takeover by a foreign power. To do this, the would-be conquerors have to have a plausible pretext, say gross misgovernance. This is where Charlie, the natural son and only child of the late king, comes in; he can be (mis)governor of the realm until the People Rise In Their Wrath and throw him out, whereupon kindly neighbors will step in and save the day. We haven't seen such delicacy of conspiring since Taylor Caldwell's *The Devil's Advocate* (1952).

However, once installed, Charlie finds that the problems of acting the Wicked Tyrant require certain concessions to the real world. Such as actually rooting out corruption, which

follows from arresting the Loyal Ministers of the Last Regime. Also, there are other management problems. And he's supposed to oppress his bride-to-be (forced of course) Lady Catherine, only he seems to be actually falling for her. And did I mention his father's ghost, hanging around the castle?

With all these problems, Charlie decides to look into sorcery, and what it has to do with that odd, useless network of deep roads all over the water-short kingdom. There really are WMD (Weapons of Magical Destruction) out there, you know, and he has to look for those also. When not being distracted by a beautiful dancer from a foreign dance troupe, that is. Or she is. (Moore isn't that modern, really.)

In other words, he's not doing his duty as the Evil Overlord. Which leads to more problems. . . . Moore has created a funny application of realism to the clichés of genre fantasy.

(The lost Shakespearean play "Cardenio", first performed in 1613, is known to have been based on *Don Quijote*. Can any Oxfordian kindly tell me how a man who died in 1604 could write a play based on a book that came out in 1605?)

FAMILY FAVORITES

Review by Joseph T Major of

KUSHIEL'S SCION

by Jacqueline Carey

(Warner Books; 2006;

ISBN 978-0-446-50002-9; \$26.95)

Sequel to *Kushiel's Dart* (2001), *Kushiel's Chosen* (2002), and *Kushiel's Avatar* (2003)

. . . stripped, kneeling, head down, eyes lowered, dark hair tied, in a knot, of some complexity, to keep her hair, from brushing her shoulders, the woman Phèdre, the ambassador, of the queen Ysandre, of Terre d'Ange, sent, by her, to speak with me, Bosk of Port Kar, who was once, on another world, in another time, known by quite a different name, was at my feet; I observed her, closely, minutely, noting, on her back, a most intricate marking; of delicate shades of color, and complex intertwinings of lines, this was said, to be the sign, of her profession, indicating a woman, of great passion, who might be taken, by any man, as worship, of her god; this sign, of her profession, was inked, by needles, into her pale skin, which was as soft, as the fabrics, of Gor, as used for slave silk, such as women, such as the one before me, would wear, when serving men.

"You will serve me," I said.

"As the lord wishes."

"You will dance."

"As the lord wishes."

"You will dance naked."

"As the lord wishes."

"Naked in chains."

"As the lord wishes."

"In chains, to the kiss of the whip."

"As the lord wishes."

Phèdre thought as she put out her hands for the manacles, *Holy Elua, spare me this man's fumblings, if his acts are as dull as his words.*

— Not by "John Norman" [John Frederick Lange] or Jacqueline Carey

All the same, perhaps Phèdre nò Delaunay de Montrève would have preferred servicing Tarl Cabot instead of having to penetrate the wilds of Daršanga to rescue Imriel de la Courcel. Imriel, you see, being in line for the throne of Terre d'Ange, and the son of the traitorous Melisende de la Courcel to boot. Melisende, having perhaps somehow read *la Histoire d'O*, had once had Phèdre attend her at an entertainment wearing only a collar, on a leash. But all that was in the previous books.

Imriel is alive, in spite of everything the Makargir could do to him, and Phèdre and Josceline didn't even have to say they were looking for *armes de destruction de masse*.

The first part of the book is Imriel's coming-of-age. He has the expected problems of one who is in line for a contested throne. Queen Ysandre did not take the expected course of having him executed; neither did Imriel do the right thing and ask to receive the sharp edge of *The King's Justice* (1985) as the Gwynedd princeling did after his relatives failed in their revolt against King Kelson.

Rather, Imriel ended up being fostered in Phèdre's household. Presumably she could keep him safe from any discontented factions looking to foment an usurpation. We see Imriel going through that troubled period when one is not quite a man, yet no longer a boy.

It's very counter-culture that Imriel has a father-figure to hand, Phèdre's lover and companion Joscelin. Who is a very good father-figure, particularly when it comes to getting Imriel out of fights. Or training him how to win them.

And as for the other matter, Phèdre tends to that too. Not personally, Blessed Elua be praised; there are some things even she won't do and being a Maureen Johnson Smith figure is one of them. (It would be interesting to see the mutual disgust should the dimension-travelling Lazarus Long ever meet this holy pro bottom.) In this land of BDSM, where *The Story of O* seems to be a religious fable, somehow simple ordinary physical love with a hierodule seems practically naïve and touching.

There is of course the matter of the successions. Queen Ysandre is married to Drustan the Cruarch of Alba, that cold and rainy kingdom across the Channel. About the only saving grace of the marital alliance is that the two realms have different rules of inheritance. Wouldn't it be a good idea if Imriel married Drustan's niece Dorelei? It would get him out of the way and the succession secured. Oh, and did I mention that Imriel's treacherous mother, Melisende, has vanished from the convent where she laired up? Everyone is worried.

Even though there are no plots to hand, Imriel figures he had better get out of the country, and everyone else seems agreeable. So

he relocates to the city on the Tiber, which oddly enough is named Tiberium. Which has a Senate, a Princeps, and other appurtenances of a culture that on other time-lines was rather broader in scope and narrower in time. Imriel manages quite well there.

I said culture, as when Imriel meets Claudia Fulvia, wife of an important senator, he finds out that “adultery” is not Tiberian. The word, that is, the act is very much so. Here, HBO’s series *Rome* would be their *Dallas*.

Claudia Fulvia isn’t doing it for a fling. Well, not entirely. It seems she is a member of a conspiracy so immense. . . well, a vast conspiracy . . . whatever, a secret society, the Unseen Guild (how can Pratchett fans resist wondering if they are trained at Unseen University?), that is working to train people at the art of covery. Since Phèdre instructed Imriel in that, it seems to be his lucky day. Or maybe not, since Phèdre’s teacher Anafiel broke with the Unseen Guild, and as he learns more context, Imriel becomes inclined to think that he had done the right thing.

All this makes getting out of town a good idea. Which Imriel does, going from the Principate to the Renaissance. The principality of Lucca is spared the burden of being the savior of society in the period of pierced equilibrium leading to the Responsible Man, under the guard of romantic reliable reasonably priced mercenaries from a city-state trained up in arms by a one-legged man . . . Gordon Dickson had a bit too much romance in his theory of the Childe Cycle.

Instead, Lucca is faced with an assault by a band of mercenaries, who are about one level above a gang of bandits, in the hire of a mad neighboring nobleman, who is really mad after Imriel cuts his hand off during a counter-ambush. (When Imriel says “Unhand that damsel!” — she’s certainly not a maiden, not after her captor’s night of passion with her — he really means it.)

Lucca may not appreciate its rescuer, the young heir to the principality, Imriel’s fellow student Lucius Tadius. You see, Lucius has become possessed by the ghost of his great-grandfather, the greater sire of lesser scions. At least he now has the military skills they need.

All which comes to a climax in which one of the lesser elements is sending a flood to Hell . . .

While Carey could be commended highly for wandering out of familiar territory with *Banewreaker* (2004) and *Godslayer* (2005), it’s really not a good idea to rewrite the *Quenta Silmarillion* with Morgoth as the good guy. But she has avoided the opposite tack of making the second series a rerun of the first one, only with an even badder bad guy who just didn’t want to get involved the first time, but this time it’s personal. Life goes on in Terre d’Ange — for everyone, good and bad, as we will see when the tale of Imriel is . . . [To Be Continued]

THE RIGHT STUFFS

Review by Joseph T Major of
PARAGAEA: A Planetary Romance

by Chris Roberson
(Pyr; 2006; ISBN 1-59102-440-7; \$15.00)

Writers who plan to tell in many volumes the story of a family with many exotic and eccentric members tend to end up getting so intrigued with the intricacy of the concept that they quit paying attention to such trivia as plot, character, plausibility, story, style, and the like. This ruined the later works of Heinlein and of Farmer, and it’s not surprising that lesser writers such as Neal Stephenson should end up having gross lapses in plot and background in such works as *Cryptonomicon* (1999) and its prequels. I blame it all on *Caleb Catlum’s America* (1936) myself.

It’s probably a good thing then that the stirring announcement of the many volumes of chronicles of the Bonaventure clan that are forthcoming comes at the end of this book. And this tale begins, not in Jake Burroughs’s vacation shack or Lord Grandrith’s Kenyan estate or Qwilghm or anyplace like that, but at Tyuratam. Akilina Mikhailovna Chirikova is ready to be shot into space in the final flight of the Vostok series. Her return to Soviet Union turns out to be just a little delayed, though . . .

The Judica-Cordiglia brothers of Italy found all sorts of lost cosmonauts, though for some curious reason the now-available archives of the Soviet space program have singularly failed to confirm their revelations in any particular. Akilina Mikhailovna becomes qualified to be a real lost cosmonaut, painted out of group shots with Chief Designer in way that, for example, unfortunate Valentin Vasiliyevich Bondarenko or drunken Grigory Grigoryevich Nelyubov were.

Akilina should have read more pulp adventure, though Burroughs must have been in ideological trouble in the Socialist Motherland for his use of feudal and bourgeois exploiters of the African, Barsoomian, Amtorian, etc. proletariats, not to mention how Lord Greystoke disposed of an Honored Chekist . . . yes, the world of Paragaea seems designed for adventure, with a multitude of intelligent races sort of co-existing, exotic, if not fantastic, and diverse technology (swordfights on airships, wo!), ancient knowledge of immense power, and the like.

Fortunately, after Akilina jumps from her capsule once it fell through the Gate to Paragaea, she found someone who spoke English. Most of the locals would have spoken some useful other language, but then, Hieronymus Bonaventure, R.N. wasn’t exactly a local himself. (He was a relative of the time-travelling lass of *Here, There, and Everywhere* (2005; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 4 #6), as said, but more on that problem elsewhere.) He too had been plucked from his natural environment, doing his bit in the great fight against Bonaparte and then one day in the South Seas . . .

The rest of the story has to do with the unusual circumstances that make possible Akilina’s return to our mundane world. This entails a lot of fighting, traveling (this means walking a fine line between boring the reader with dull nothing days and sloughing over

immense efforts, which Roberson manages), and learning.

Also catching a cyclically reborn semi-divinity at just the right moment . . .

The story is amusing, if light, and Roberson is to be commended for his attention to the realities of the human condition in some usually unconsidered particulars. Dos vedanya, Zinovia Gieronymusovna Chirikova . . .

In *Here, There, and Everywhere*, Roberson showed an acquaintance with the broad topics of SF; he could combine them well, but did not seem to have much of a point to it all. Here, at least, the point is that the “adventure” appears to the unknowing world to be a fake, the hero (heroine) returns to the real world and no one believes her tale. Only, this time, she has some real proof.

Roberson has the basic ideas down pat and is developing an appreciation of their portrayal. It would be very nice to read some more straightforward adventure from him. However, he obtained one other idea in the course of his work which is not going to do it so well.

Evidently Akilina had the same problem transliterating the name of her daughter “Sinovia” that Israel Azimov did with their last name when he, his wife, and their little boy Izaak left the Motherland, or perhaps Akilina didn’t want to send a “Zinovia Letter” to her lover’s family in England for some reason. So to some extent his problem of “not doing anything with all this” works out here.

You’d think Akilina would have mourned the Chief Designer Sergei Pavlovich Korolev, who died during the time between her flight and her return from Paragaea to Earth.

WARS ARE NOT WON BY EVACUATIONS

Review by Joseph T Major of
BLACK POWDER WAR

by Naomi Novik

(Del Rey; 2006; ISBN 0-345-48130-5; \$7.50)

Sequel to *His Majesty’s Dragon* (2006) and

Throne of Jade (2006),

reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 5 #3

It was the old Brigadier who was talking in the café:

Have I told you of what came to pass at the siege of Dantzig? No? You must know, then, that after my heroic endeavours in the Austrian campaign, I had come to the notice of the Corps of Dragons. It was with great regret that I left the Hussars of Bercheny, for I had gained some small reputation there, but an officer must go where he is ordered.

After my part in the great battle at Iéna, and the taking of three fortresses stuffed with Prussians, I had thought my brave dragon Violette and I could rest. But the Marshal Lefevbre had asked for me by name . . .

— Not by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle or Naomi Novik

At the end of *Throne of Jade*, Captain

Laurence of the Fleet Air Arm, er the Corps of Dragons, had achieved some kind of balance of dragons with the huang-ti and his court. But there was more to come, and sure enough, this story begins with their desperate summons to Konstantinye. It seems that the Turk has consented to sell three dragon eggs to the infidel king, fire-breathing dragons moreover; a commodity a little short in Blighty this past three hundred or so years. But it does appear to be more than a little odd that they must send *this* dragon, who is out all the way in China.

Especially when a fire disables Temeraire's aircraft er dragon carrier. This leaves them with but one recourse, to fly down the Silk Route to the Ottoman dominions. (Why they don't pass through Tong-king and Siam to the East India Company's lands, and then through Persia to the Ottoman empire is a good question.)

After suffering through the horrors of travel in Turkmenistan, Laurence, Temeraire, and their crew find some small problems in the Ottoman capital. Like, the British ambassador has died and the money sent to pay for the dragons has disappeared. Oh, and the feral dragons who took up with Temeraire for a bit caused a little problem with the Sultan's herd of cattle.

So they get locked up. In spite of this some of the men figure out how to get into real trouble, that is, by trying to sneak into the Sultan's harim. This ain't Hope & Crosby movies, chaps! Tension is continuing to rise.

Particularly after Laurence finally decides to get the eggs anyhow. It seems the Sultan did get the money and is holding on to it, or so the banker who handled the transfer, and his daughter, report. (I'm a bit surprised that Laurence didn't turn out to be an anti-Semite, but he seems to have more sense.) Thus, they decide to take what H.M.G. paid for, which just might cause problems.

Such as where they get into after escaping. You see, it's 1806, and Boney is taking after the Prussians. Temeraire and crew manage to link up with the Prussian army and get a first-hand view of the battle of Jena. Also, beforehand, a certain gunner from Corsica doing a reccy — Napoleon finally got his dragon. And worse yet, Laurence can't even do anything about it.

Dragons can't turn the tide of the Prussian debacle, and the only safe place for the English is in Danzig. Yes, they may die for Danzig. Or perhaps not, as the Navy's here — if they can only get by the fire-breathing night-flying dragon. As the man said, wars are not won by evacuations . . .

Novik continues to describe well Regency society and technology with that added layer of dragons; as I've said, the *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norell* (2004) problem still applies. In this story, of course, there is the little matter of Dragon Emancipation — I say, they haven't even done that for bloody papists! But people who like Richard Russ will like this, and will be pleased to learn that the story of Laurence, Temeraire, and the rest is . . . **[To Be Continued]**

LEGAL NEWS

Review by Joseph T Major of **THE CLAN CORPORATE**

by Charles Stross

(Tor; 2006; ISBN 0-765-30930-0; \$24.95)

“Book Three of *The Merchant Princes*”

Sequel to *The Family Trade* (2005; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 4 #2)

and *The Hidden Family* (2005; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 4 #5)

When we left Miriam, she had just become no better off than her relatives; they having learned that there was a third time-line as well as the one where they were in with the powers that be and the one where they smuggled dope to buy luxuries. While everyone else was watching *The Sopranos*, Miriam had been reading *Lest Darkness Fall*, and was trying to kickstart the third time line so as to lessen the Clan's dependence on cocaine and heroin.

However, law enforcement has its way in the other timelines. In ours, a special interagency task force is mobilized to deal with this unusual situation. In the third timeline, the security cracks down. And in the Clan's timeline, the problem of getting the timeline-travelling gene into play in the royal line comes up.

You see, the crown prince's younger brother has the potential. But he has to have a wife who has the potential, or the ability, for their children to have the ability. Add to this that he was brain-damaged as an infant and . . . Miriam has a very unhappy forced marriage to look forward to, and she isn't looking forward to it.

However revolution seems to be a commonplace, and trouble is universal. All which leaves Miriam in peril no matter where she goes and which will be even worse when this is . . . **[To Be Continued]**

ELMO OF THE APES

Review by Joseph T Major of
MASTER OF ADVENTURE:

The Worlds of Edgar Rice Burroughs

by Richard A. Lupoff

with an essay by Phillip R. Burger

(Bison Books/University of Nebraska Press;

2005; ISBN 0-8032-8030-0; \$16.95)

Revision and updating of *Edgar Rice Burroughs: Master of Adventure* (1965; 1968)

Lupoff knew something was wrong when he attended a Burroughs conference here in Louisville back in 'ninety-four and found himself being besieged by copies of *Edgar Rice Burroughs: Master of Adventure* being proffered for autographing. Little had been done in the commentary & criticism department of Burroughs's fiction since he had produced that book.

Now, the University of Nebraska Press has added this classic work to its line of famous pulp fiction; not only added it, but brought it up to date.

The old reader, such as I, will remember Lupoff's avid discussion of the genesis of the story of the man whom we shall call John Clayton, Lord Greystoke, and his son and heir, White Skin, er Tarzan. Lupoff mentions the background works that provided the

wherewithal for this work, for “Under the Moons of Mars”, and the other famed productions of his pen and typer.

Lupoff does not hesitate to make judgments, as when he refers to the dismal series of Tarzan novels which featured the guy, the girl, the two quarreling cities, the lustful king who wanted the girl, the seductive queen who wanted Tarzan, and Tarzan (sans family), as mining out of a very familiar vein. He does, however, like the politics of one of them, namely *Tarzan Triumphant* (1931), such as the scene where “Stalin, dictator of Red Russia” personally sends off an assassin to do a wet affair on Lord Greystoke (Page xxxiv). If the updating had been more thorough it would have mentioned the similar experience of Pavel A. Sudoplatov (*Special Tasks*, Pages 21-22).

In the introduction to this issue, Lupoff explains that he can't bring himself to do all the updating. This is why the final (long) chapter is by Philip R. Burger, a consultant to Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc. Burger updates the story, so to speak, with comments on the last few unpublished Burroughs works that came out, the new Tarzan works by Joe R. Lansdale, R. A. Salvator, and (no doubt to his own immense satisfaction) Philip José Farmer, and the various adaptations of various sorts. Most of these don't quite live up to their potential, or at least the potential as seen by ERB devotees. (Such as the ones who, stuck by trademark restrictions on “Tarzan”, write fan fiction about “Elmo of the Apes, Lord of the Jungle”, in honor of Elmo Lincoln, the first actor to play you-know-who.)

Burger could touch more on Farmer's imposition of his own concepts on Burroughs's works. This is a problem that detracts from the products of writers “playing in another writer's universe”, completing another writer's unfinished stories, continuing the saga of the late beloved writer, and the like.

Master of Adventure is a needed updating and polishing of a useful and entertaining work of reference and just plain fun reading. I have spoken.

THE CHINA SYNDROME

Review by Joseph T Major of
PREEMPTIVE STRIKE:

The Secret Plan That Would Have Prevented the Attack on Pearl Harbor

by Alan Armstrong

(The Lyons Press; 2006;

ISBN 1-59228-913-4; \$22.95) and

LOST IN TIBET:

The Untold Story of Five American Airmen, a Doomed Plane, and the Will to Survive

by Richard Starks and Miriam Murcutt

(The Lyons Press; 2004, 2005;

ISBN 1-59228-785-9; \$14.95)

At noon, all across the country, whistles blew and everyone stopped. The speech was broadcast on every radio channel and repeated on loudspeakers. Everyone heard the unfamiliar voice speaking in an antiquated dialect, saying:

“To Our Good and Loyal Subjects: Yesterday, the seventh day of the twelfth

month of the sixteenth year of Showa — a date which will live in infamy — The Empire of Japan was suddenly and deliberately attacked by air units of the United States of America. We were at peace with that nation, and at the solicitation of America, were still in conversation with its government and its president looking towards the maintenance of peace in East Asia.

"Indeed, one hour after American air squadrons had commenced bombing in Our port of Hiroshima, the American ambassador to Japan delivered to Our Foreign Minister a formal reply to a recent message of Our government. And this reply contained no threat or hint of war or of armed attack.

"It will be recorded that the distance of Our Empire from America makes it obvious that the attack was deliberately planned many days or even weeks ago. During the intervening time, the American government has deliberately sought to deceive Us by false statements and expressions of hope for continued peace.

"The attack yesterday on Hiroshima has caused severe damage to Our naval and military forces. We regret to tell you that very many Japanese lives have been lost. In addition, Our ships have been reported torpedoed on the high seas between Nagasaki and Shanghai..."

The American relationship with China has been a curious one. The country has been seen as a vast market waiting to be tapped, from selling every one of a billion Chinese one shoe each, all the way up to saving all their souls.

The Japanese relationship with China was also curious. On the one hand, the Japanese saw China as the fount of all culture and knowledge; on the other, they saw it as their sphere of influence, exclusive market, and indeed colonial dependency.

As a result, there was a great wave of good feeling in America towards Brave Little China, being ground beneath the Japanese iron heel. Which attitude the Japanese took every care to promote and encourage, what with assaults, atrocities, cruelties, and massacres, and they weren't all that nice to the Chinese, either.

Technology had made vast developments within living memory. It looked as if a handful of bombing aircraft could bring a great and powerful nation to its knees, if you believed World War Ace Alexander P. de Seversky (see *Victory Through Air Power* (1942) and its Disney adaptation). Or Claire Chennault.

This is the story of Chennault's efforts to obtain a mercenary air force for China so it could launch a *Preemptive Strike* against Japan. It does not deal with the actual combat operations of the American Volunteer Group, the "Flying Tigers", the only unit actually formed as a result of his efforts, though it does describe the recruitment and assembly of the unit.

Armstrong discusses more the plans of then only Captain Chennault. Among his more grandiose ones were the hopes for the crippling

of Japan by bombing raids from China.

But this required the cooperation of China, which tended to be problematic. It is a sign of the confusion and disorder in the Chinese government that their chief air expert was Song Meiling — that is, May-ling Soong, Mme. Chiang Kai-shek, the "Dragon Lady" And indeed she probably knew as much about air power as anyone in the Chinese government, and was as skilled at administration as any other potential air commander. Which was one of the problems; the Kuomintang government was noted for intrigue, deceit, and misadministration.

Now in the U.S. . . . Armstrong cites one significant source, the personal diaries of Henry Morgenthau. It seems that the U.S. government was taking a very liberal approach to defining "all aid short of war" when dealing with China.

One of the people involved in the planning may have had an additional agenda, albeit one that corresponded with the Administration's. State Department official Lauchlin Currie was one of the more vigorous supporters of the Chennault proposal. That's Lauchlin Currie as in Agent PAGE — one of the NKVD's boys. Was he helping to advance the inevitable outcome of history by embroiling the capitalist powers in more conflict?

Armstrong discusses various sources of aircraft, including Lend-Lease planes that the British really didn't need just yet, the B-17s in the Philippines, and so on. All these had the problem of actually getting there. Once they got there, other problems arose. There was the matter of internal disorder in China, understand.

The crisis was running faster than anyone had thought, and indeed many of the supplies intended for the American Volunteer Group were unwillingly redirected. The war abruptly expanded, you see.

The prospects of "bringing down Japanese aggression" with a surgical strike from Brave Little China were far more virtual than real. When such bombing raids finally were made from China, the response of the Japanese was to capture the airfields from which they had been launched. And this was in 1944, when they had other calls on their military.

Domestically, the prospects of opposition were not all that great. There was a groundswell of support in America for China against Japanese aggression and human rights violations, and the administration did work within the framework of existing laws, if somewhat aggressively interpreting them.

Chennault had proposed bombing Tokyo, which given the position at that time could have been done by B-17s with lighter bomb loads and more fuel, or other cities in southern Japan. Such as the naval base in southern Honshu — Hiroshima. With American pilots (even in the Chinese military) flying American planes (even with Chinese insignia), it's hard to think, however, that this would be considered anything but an American attack.

Much of this can be described as intensive investigation into an unimportant part of a vaster set of circumstances. These findings are likely to be taken out of context and used to advance

a political agenda, too. Such agendas are skewed so as to deny any other group or nation the power of choice, of planning, of action, of intent; all actions being the result of the scheming of the wicked government. Oddly enough, these selfsame people will virtuously disparage racism and ethnocentrism, ascribing those attitudes to their opponents, never never to themselves. They call that "projection".

One wonders why China would not be entitled to defend itself against a particularly cruel invasion, and why the United States should be required to consent to the Japanese "Imperial Way".

Armstrong, a lawyer and a pilot, has provided an interesting new perspective on the events of the Greater East Asia War.

The effort to implement Chennault's plans had some very stressful results. The Japanese offensives had made the position in China unassailable except by air. The grand predictions of Victory Through Air Power were found to have some shaky underpinnings. (Did de Seversky ever — for example — address the shortcomings of air supply shown by the efforts to supply Stalingrad?) Many lives were lost in this effort, and others came closer to that than they would have liked.

In November 1943, an American C-87 transport plane — a converted B-24 "Liberator" bomber — flying from China to India, across the "Hump", was blown off course, ran out of fuel, and crashed. The passengers and crew, five U.S. Army Air Force men, after baling out all survived unharmed, and reached India by the end of the year — on Christmas Eve, as a matter of fact.

Now in fact this is not an altogether noteworthy story as so presented. There isn't much in the way of survival in the teeth of adversity. The usual tropes of such adventures — the survival gear being lost, discarded, or useless, improvising weapons from scraps, desperately signaling a search plane and being ignored, having to decide whether to eat one survivor, and so on — are singularly lacking. Indeed, all the fliers found helpful and indeed friendly natives the morning after they bailed out, and were reunited that same day.

The problem, see, was that they had not landed in China; they were *Lost in Tibet*.

This isn't a story of man against nature, in other words. Their problem was one entirely beyond their control; one showing the contrast between peoples and governments. The flyers were prepared to land in China; they had everything from leaflets to jacket patches showing them as friends of the Republic of China. However, China was not the most popular nation in Tibet at that time, you see.

The relations between Tibet and China had been a source of great strife for years. For example, in A.D. 797 (the thirteenth year of the Chen yüan [Pinyin: Zhenuan] era of the Te Tsung [Pinyin: De Zong] emperor), Trisong Detsen, the king of Tibet, occupied Chang-an, the capital of China under the then-reigning T'ang Dynasty. (This was about a century after Judge Dee [Ti Jen-Chieh (Pinyin: Di Renjie)],

the real-life basis of Robert van Gulik's detective novels). Since then there had been ups and downs but in general there was little love lost between the two countries.

The pilots and crew made it to Lhasa. But there, they found themselves tied up in knots over the debate about policy towards Tibet. The Nationalist Chinese government hoped to take over, when they had the resources available. The British were pulling out in a while, so didn't care. The Americans were making the world safe for little countries. (Remember, the first CIA officer killed was trying to cross into Tibet.) The Tibetans wanted everyone to keep off. While the five Americans were learning about a new country, political controversy determined their fate.

But in the end, they just packed up and left. One was killed in the war; the four others passed on at various intervals, the last in 1998. Their stories were recounted by their families. What this book does is to give a picture of Tibetan life as it was not long before it was devastated by "liberation".

. . . It would have been easy, Crozier thought, to have taken a superior view of the Tibetans. They were ragged and dirty, ignorant and unworldly, so it was tempting to see them as little more than overgrown children. But the Tibetans had qualities that Crozier had come to admire . . . The Tibetans he had met, with rare exception, had been generous and kind. They may have lived in an unforgiving land — and lacked even the most basic of amenities — but they had managed to create a society that was based, in part, on shared acceptance. There was little dissension, and seemingly no envy. Tibet was certainly unfair. It was also subject to abuse and corruption. But somehow it seemed to work.

— *Lost in Tibet*, Page 164

I CAN PERSUADE HIM

Review by Joseph T Major of
MY DEAR MR. STALIN:

The Complete Correspondence of Franklin D. Roosevelt and Joseph V. Stalin

Edited, with commentary, by Susan Butler
Foreword by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.
(Yale University Press; 2005;
ISBN 0-300-10854-0)

One can imagine how this book would have been received had it been published half a century ago. Thousands of retired officers, little old ladies in tennis shoes, guys with white robes and hoods packed away in the closet, and so on, would have been on tenterhooks waiting for the **REAL PROOF**, the very words in which the Satanic Master in the Kremlin commanded his servant, That Man In the White House, to do his evil bidding, to destroy White Christian America. While professors, trust-fund white-gloved ladies, think-tank veterans of the heady days when all America was theirs to remold as they knew was right, and their comrades would

be looking mournfully for the proof of how Our Franklin had striven manfully (manliness was not an oppressive signifier back then) to defend Fellow Democrat Joe against the knuckle-dragging Malefactors of Great Wealth here, there, and everywhere.

Neither would be pleased with the reality.

I suppose one could say that it is a disappointment, with all the terrible secrets being pulled out of the *Annals of Communism*, that this correspondence is so banal. A substantial proportion of these messages are birthday greetings, congratulations of various sorts, wishes of good health, and the like.

Sometimes the content of these exchanges dips to the petty, where Roosevelt patiently informs Stalin of the names of the ships being lent to the Soviets in lieu of units of the Italian fleet, and the tonnages of the merchant ships (Pages 206-207). Why should such a matter even be considered at that level?

Some of course are not so fluffy. Roosevelt at least tried to defend the Polish exile government's position on the Katyn massacre even though he also seemed to find it a conflict between domestic and foreign politics. Stalin's message seems almost petulant (Pages 123-124) while the editor includes a commentary from U.S. Secretary of State Cordell Hull which while not openly saying so, implicitly accuses the Soviets of the murder (Pages 124-125). Not surprisingly, the discussion was diverted into accusations regarding the Polish exile government.

While these messages, in their confirmation of other sources, not to mention their frequent triviality, are not surprising overall, there are a number of questions that are not raised in the commentary. Given that the introduction is by someone with a reputation of defending FDR, it is not surprising that such issues would not be raised. For example:

In the introduction, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. states that Joseph Davies found the purge trials to be dubious (Pages 17-18). This is a radical new revelation, considering the blatant statements to the contrary in Davies's memoir of his ambassadorship, *Mission to Moscow* (1941).

In August of 1943, Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles resigned his post. The letter of 25 September 1943 is an apology for Secretary of State Cordell Hull's health problems, requiring changes in the forthcoming foreign ministers' conference that Welles had been scheduled to attend and that Hull had to in his stead (Pages 166-167). The background material attributes Welles's resignation to Hull's "discomfiture" at his and Roosevelt's close relationship. However, the real reason Welles resigned was over a different sort of close relationship; Welles had propositioned a number of Pullman porters during a train trip in 1940, evidently not the first time either. For some reason Butler doesn't mention this.

One letter, dated March 24, 1944, concerns an abortive effort to establish a liaison and coordination between the OSS, the American special warfare organization, and the Soviet NKVD. The president cancelled the plan and

Butler quotes Averill Harriman as saying, almost apologetically, "J. Edgar Hoover and Admiral Leahy had been responsible for changing the President's mind." (Page 217; citing Harriman's book *Special Envoy*).

Butler reports that the initial negotiations were in Moscow, between General William Donovan, the chief of the OSS, and two senior NKVD officers: "Lt. Gen. P. N. Fitin, chief of the External Intelligence Service, and Maj. Gen. A. P. Ossipov, head of the section that conducted subversive activities in enemy countries." (Pages 217-218). Pavel Mikhailovich Fitin appears in the VENONA decrypts several times, under the code name VIKTOR, running intelligence efforts against the U.S. from 1942 on. "Ossipov" was a pseudonym for NKVD officer Gaik B. Ovakimyan, the former New York station chief for the NKVD, who had been expelled from the U.S. in 1941. For some reason Butler doesn't mention this.

A recurring theme is Soviet suspicion of a separate peace. Butler cites an article from *Pravda* on January 17, 1944 claiming that "two leading British personalities" met with the German Foreign Minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop, to discuss a separate peace. Then, regarding a real meeting, one of the last messages is a telegram from Stalin demanding Soviet representation at Allen Dulles's negotiations for a German surrender in Italy (Pages 305-307). There are various reports of Soviet negotiations for a separate peace, which broke down because the Germans demanded too much. These are of course not mentioned, and were not mentioned at the time.

My Dear Mr. Stalin is important, in a negative sort of way, as confirming other reports and presentations of history. It is rather a partisan work, and should be read in conjunction with other works on the era.

The Yale University Press had previously brought out a book with other letters beginning "Dear Mr. Stalin": *What Stalin Knew* (2005), by David E. Murphy, which includes what purport to be the texts of two letters written to Stalin by Hitler. Two very reassuring letters; no doubt Stalin's paranoia was confirmed in retrospect, and he may have regarded these messages in a similar light.

ONE FOR ALL AND TWO FOR FIVE

Review by Joseph T Major of
THE FOUR MUSKETEERS:
The True Story of d'Artagnan, Porthos,
Aramis & Athos

by Kari Maund and Phil Nanson
(Tempus Publishing; 2006;
ISBN 978-0-7524-3503-9; \$27.50)

It was the old Brigadier who was talking in the café:

I see where there is soon to appear a romance of the four men of Gascony; M. de Batz-Castlemore, M. de Portau, M. d'Aramitz, and M. d'Athos. Their descendants are yet in Gascony, and hearing of their adventurous lives from

their families made our long nights round the fire alive with excitement. Little did I know that that excited boy, I, Étienne Gérard, would have as many fascinating adventures as they — Sir, I am your debtor!

— Not by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle or even Alexandre Dumas

Charles de Batz-Castlemore is not unknown to history. His devoted obedience to duty in the service of the young King Louis XIV, his firm hand in command of the *Mousquetaires du Roi* (where, in partnership with M. de Churchill, he saved the life of Monseigneur le Duc de Monmouth), his gallant death on the field of honor at the siege of Maastricht, have earned him a small but not undeserved place in the annals of France.

However, most of us know him under the title he sort of aggrandized to himself; and at that, as a character of a striking fiction. For Charles de Batz-Castlemore called himself Seigneur d'Artagnan [and later Comte d'Artagnan]; and d'Artagnan is famous as the fourth of *The Three Musketeers* (*Les Trois Mousquetaires*, 1844) and its many sequels.

But Dumas began by saying that he had found a biography of the man. This is your typical framing sequence, of course — except that there really was such a book. Admittedly, its veracity was not much better than Dumas's novel.

Maund and Nanson have explicated a complex structure of relationships in this work. They discuss the real d'Artagnan and the real Isaac de Portau ("Porthos"), Armand de Sillègue d'Athos d'Autevielle ("Athos"), and Henri d'Aramitz ("Aramis"). They were from the same part of France, and the authors tell about their various fates, progeny, and so on, as well as discussing the characters in the book.

It was royal patronage that made d'Artagnan as well off as he was, and he was also a client of Cardinal Mancini (so much for *Vingt ans après* [*Twenty Years After*] (1845)). This leads to a discussion of the military history of their unit, the *Mousquetaires du Roi*, the French king's body-guard and shock troop. This last was what got d'Artagnan killed. (The musketeer companies tended to be disbanded in each royal infancy; the authors pass over the inept revival under Louis XVIII during the period after Napoleon's first abdication, where they proved to be no longer d'Artagnans; see Chapter 31 of *Swords Around a Throne* by Colonel John R. Elting (1997) for that sad tale.)

They discuss the man who made it all possible, Gatién de Courttilz de Sandras, and his work, *Mémoires de M. d'Artagnan* (1700). Courttilz de Sandras seems to have been a bit of a fantast, and for a different reason always in trouble. The *Mémoires of d'Artagnan* have more to do with Courttilz himself than with Charles de Batz-Castlemore d'Artagnan.

Then, another writer found them . . . *Les Trois Mousquetaires* was quite the literary sensation in France at the time of its publication, and the authors discuss its reception; the book had the misfortune of being popular, and was

accordingly disliked by literary authorities

Their discussion of the book goes into how Dumas took incidents from Courttilz's narrative and reworked them into a more interesting and dramatic narrative. Which leads us to Dumas's habits of having others do first drafts. It was not as bad as we, who live in the era of "celebrity authors" who will someday read "their own" books, would believe. Dumas proposed the topic and heavily reworked outlines. When his "first-draft" collaborators tried to sell by themselves, they didn't, so he must have been the one who had the spark.

Finally, the authors discuss the Musketeers after the novel. Sharecropped sequels followed inevitably, as well as Dumas's own (besides *Twenty Years After* there is *Le Vicomte de Bragelonne* (1848-50), a novel so long it is usually broken up and the last part known as *The Man In the Iron Mask*). There were plays, the first of which was *The Musketeers*, by Dumas himself with Auguste Maquet, performed in 1845; it's based on *Twenty Years After*. And when movies came along, there were movies. The authors think well of the Ilya Salkind production (script by George MacDonald Fraser) *The Three Musketeers* and *The Four Musketeers*.

And of course they mention the fantasy adaptations, Joel Rosenberg's *Not Exactly the Three Musketeers* (1999) and Steven Brust's *The Phoenix Guards* (1991) *Five Hundred Years After* (1994), *The Paths of the Dead* (2002), *The Lord of Castle Black* (2003), and *Sethra Lavode* (2004).

The Four Musketeers provides a welcome and entertaining explanation and history of a book which has had the annoying habit of being voluntarily read by people in the place of those great classics approved by the experts. All for one and one for all.

We're cheered from Cologne to Algiers

Each time our motto appears

It's one for all and two for five

We're four of the three musketeers.

— "The Musketeers", Bert Kalmar and Harry Ruby, "Animal Crackers"

YOU DON'T KNOW

Review by Joseph T Major of

STRANGE ANGEL:

The Otherworldly Life of Rocket Scientist John Whiteside Parsons

by George Pendle

(Harcourt; 2005; ISBN 0-15-100997-X;

\$25.00)

Rocketry is perhaps the prime example of a field of activity in which the founders become profoundly unable to work in it once the field has matured. I am grateful to Bill Breuer for calling my attention to the case of the Mercury capsule that would not fit on the Atlas rocket that was to launch it on a test. Nowadays, there would be two years of delays marked by inquests, hearings, and recriminations; back then, they went to Sears, bought a router, and ground down the capsule's heat shield to fit.

Konstantin Eduardovich Tsiolkovsky died too soon to take part in government operations (and considering that Sergei Pavlovich Korolev got to the post of Chief Designer by way of Kolyma, perhaps that was a blessing), but the other two Fathers of Rocketry found themselves sidelined. Robert Hutchings Goddard, initially ridiculed and consequently secretive, withdrew into his own tests and did nothing more to influence the field. Hermann Julius Oberth, after a spell writing papers he could not get clearance to read, went back to Germany and worked on rather hard-line politics.

Marvel Whiteside Parsons would have understood all this, mostly because he did. Born in Pasadena in 1914 to Marvel H. Parsons and the former Ruth Virginia Whiteside, he gained a more normal first name after his parents' divorce, becoming John Whiteside Parsons, but known more as "Jack".

Jack suffered through the problems of a bright but unruly child. (Throughout his life and particularly in the means of his death, but this is getting somewhat ahead of the story.) He had the freedom and the burden of being an outsider, a member of a well-to-do family, an only child. He could make explosives in a frame structure inside the city limits, for example.

Also, there was a publication called *Amazing Stories* out there, displaying speculation about the future and the effects of science. A lot of people took it to heart. Jack Parsons was one of a group of young rocket boys who coalesced into a research group.

Now if you've read *Rocket Ship Galileo* or *October Sky* you should know what happened next. That's right, explosions! Parsons and his friends had available some reasonably untenanted land nearby, and so the gorges near Pasadena began to resound to the roar of exploding rocket engines.

As the world crisis itself exploded, Parsons and his friends (who rejoiced in the significant name of the "Suicide Squad") became serious players, working on rocket engines for someone who was willing to pay actual money for that Buck Rogers stuff — the War Department. Pendle describes how Parsons developed a stable, (comparatively) safe fuel for rocket-assisted takeoff — called, out of a need not to appear like that childish Buck Rogers stuff, "Jet Assisted Takeoff", JATO. (JATO rockets were fitted to the R4D *Que Sera Sera* that landed at the South Pole in 1956 so that it could take off again, for example.)

As usually happens, the innovators prove unable to provide the management skills or even develop the cooperation needed as their work becomes mature, evolving from development to production. Parsons and most of his fellow early researchers were persuaded to be bought out of the firm that they founded, Aerojet, after the war, and separated from the other organization they had set up, the Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

Parsons retired to his house, worked with various other partners in diverse ventures, most of them not very successful, and by 1952 was reduced to being a movie special-effects technician. He was preparing squibs for a

movie shootout when the chemicals he was working with detonated, apparently after he dropped the can he was stirring them in.

So far we have a picture of an amiable eccentric, brilliant, persistent, and innovative, but really too odd to readily function in a structured organization. But Jack Parsons was notorious, sinister. How did that come to pass?

Pendle also recounts, with a serious tone, the esoteric events of his private life. Parsons, you see, was a believer in Magick, and from that spelling the well-informed reader should be able to tell who he was involved with.

Pendle has set himself the difficult task of treating not one but two of the more unsavory personalities of the period and milieu as if they were worthwhile people. The one who was the first influence on this part of Parsons's life was the English mountaineer and writer Edward Alexander Crowley — better known as Aleister Crowley, better known as an occultist, explorer of what he called Magick.

Pendle portrays him as a philosophical explorer, interested in spiritual self-development and exploration of unrealized human potentials. He would probably have been pleased with that portrayal, but few others would have. The image of a wasted, heroin-addicted, broken man who had run through all the money he had or could get, destroyed the lives of the people he had dealt with, used up and abandoned mistresses like lavatory paper, is more like it.

Parsons became involved with the Los Angeles group of Crowley's O.T.O. The picture given here is of a somewhat otherworldly group of unusual thinkers, a more intellectual approach to the New Age. Again, this isn't quite what other observers have made of it, though Pendle hints at a certain high level of sexual experimentation in the group.

Which brings us to the other unsavory person, your friend and mine Lafayette Ronald Hubbard. Pendle touches on Elron's early writing days, how he moved from the general pulp field to specifically fantastic fiction, and became involved with the circle that also included Parsons after WWII, telling tales of his naval heroics. (And Pendle doesn't mention how inflated those were.)

The description of the evocation of Babalon the spirit, done by Elron, Parsons, and Parsons's sister-in-law and lover Betty (Sarah Elizabeth) Northrup omits one or two little facts, such as how Babalon was going to be incarnated (Parsons was reading spells to keep off mere human souls while Elron and Betty were, er, anticipating their marital privileges). Then came the yacht swindle, then the Science of Modern Mental Health, then came the dropped can . . .

In the course of this narrative, Pendle has mentioned many persons and organizations of interest. For example, he recounts the very early days of what was then the Los Angeles Science Fiction League (now LASFS) as it met in cafeterias and planned to send men to the stars. He also describes the fascinating personalities of that era, Robert A. Heinlein,

Jack Williamson, Ray Bradbury, and a man who contributed wholeheartedly and deeply to this work, Forrest J. Ackerman. (As if I could forget him.)

The portrayal of that different country that is the past, that time and place where everything seemed possible and the stars were out there, is a heartbreaking reminder of how much we have lost in the advance of the world.

COOL HAND LUKE

Review by Joseph T Major of
HELP AT ANY COST

How the Troubled-Teen Industry Cons Parents and Hurts Kids

by Maia Szalavitz
(Riverhead (Penguin); 2006;
ISBN 1-59448-910-6; \$25.95)

Aaron barely had enough gear to live. His boots, for example, were what he could get; two sizes too small. Nevertheless he was ordered to march into the desert.

There was no food for him, and that combined with his intestinal problems began to weaken him. The guards abused him for falling out, as he was so obviously faking it.

He was dunked, then punished by being deprived of his sleep gear. He couldn't carry his pack, so he had no food. In spite of which he was incontinent, so much so that he quit wearing trousers or underpants — for which he was further punished.

Three weeks after he was taken prisoner, he died of peritonitis caused by an untreated intestinal ulcer.

If you find this unspeakable cruelty, an atrocious violation of civil and human rights, you just don't understand. This was therapy.

Maia Szalavitz, a writer for publications ranging from *Reason* to *O*, reports here on a disturbing trend in juvenile therapy. A little discussion of the background will help. In *Psychobabble* (1977), R. D. Rosen recounts the stories of a number of "new therapies", telling a repetitive tale of authoritarianism, clannishness, and abuse; the climax being the story of a woman who entered such a program for a minor problem and under its direction and care developed into a psychologically disabled, self-mutilating, emotionally manipulative paranoid who had to be treated constantly, and ended up taking her own life.

Most of these therapies collapsed. The survivors became more cultish. Indeed, the story of one therapy, a group that was praised as a solution to addiction, became a cult, in all the meaning of that word: Synanon. The story of its explosive decompression is recounted in several works, notably *The Light on Synanon* by Dave Mitchell et al. (1980)

But as adults had the ability and desire to get out of such matters; quit sitting in Est seminars for sixteen hours nonstop, confessing in rebirthing seminars to having been always agents of Trotsky, er alcoholics, and the like, they found someone else who really needed this therapy and had no choice in the matter. Their children.

Much of this therapy was designed for the hard-core offender for whom no other method had worked. The "new therapies" that Rosen discussed were intended for the emotionally stable; the profoundly disturbed found themselves in these seminars, with amazing (not necessarily good) effect. Similarly, these therapies were prescribed for major offenders, minor offenders, those who were suspected of being offenders, and even those who were suspected of possibly being on the way to becoming offenders. That's right, if your ex-wife thinks your son might be thinking of a toke, she can have thugs break into your house at midnight, jerk the boy out of bed, and ship him off to a facility that Nikolai Ivanovich Yezhov, he of the Soviet Great Terror, would consider deserving of an Honored Chekist award for spectacularly overfulfilling their quotas for brutality.

These facilities come across as innovative and experimental, thus not able to be regulated by existing authorities. Instead they set up their own licensing group, the World Wide Association of Specialty Programs (WWASP). The result is that many have staff who would qualify as unfit to be prison guards, too untrained, inexperienced, and brutal. (Szalavitz cites a psychological experiment of "guards and prisoners" that was aborted when the "guards" became too brutal; and this was only an experiment (Pages 36-37).) And they come cheap, too. Szalavitz gives some figures on how such programs are such profit centers, charging parents \$12,000 or more per patient while paying sub-minimum wage to staffers, and not much more for food and shelter. The therapists who made Aaron undergo such tough love, for example, were pulling down \$1,000,000 — \$1,500,000 net a year.

The world is flat, as Thomas D. Friedman reports, and what this means is that such facilities can be international. Teens being taken to Costa Rica, Jamaica, or Samoa for such treatment puts them outside even the minimal reach of American jurisprudence. And the State Department has a record of indifference. (Where are all the human rights and civil liberties groups? This is therapy, it's for their own good.)

One of those treatment methods used in Samoa was taken from *Cool Hand Luke*. That's right, when a boy showed deviant behavior, he was put in the box, a three foot by three foot holding facility (Page 138). At least it was high enough for them to stand. (Look up "Little Ease" sometime.)

As mentioned, often children were taken from houses at night, by methods eerily reminiscent (though Szalavitz doesn't, perhaps doesn't dare, mention it) of Soviet arrest techniques. "Escorts" would drive the patient some eighteen hours virtually nonstop to the facility. This is not the sort of escort service one enjoys hiring for oneself.

Even those who were theoretically adult were kept in, by methods ranging from manipulation to outright confinement. There, the theory was so much in keeping with modern therapeutic doctrine that it can be understood

why these organizations fit: thus, children who had never used recreational drugs were adjudged to be in denial, and subjected to stronger measures. (The way that innocent victims of child molestation accusations have a harder time in prison than the guilty, because by maintaining their innocence they are considered to be in denial.)

Lulu, for example, was sentenced to thirteen years in such a facility for wearing an artificial leather body suit like Madonna wore. While wanting to dress like Mads is not the best of taste, the sentence does seem excessive. Look carefully at that term; she was sent up when she was thirteen, and yes, they kept her in juvenile confinement for six "adult" years.

When they finally got to trial, the defense maintained that Lulu had been molested as a child, was a druggie, and that they really cared for children. This last comment came after the therapist in question had to adjourn for a bathroom break. The therapy included not only refusing the patients such leave during long sessions of therapy, but when it was finally granted, supervising their time spent, er, doing so. (Remember "est"?) The organization's insurance company setted for a big judgment; they couldn't give Lulu back her teenage years.

Parents are encouraged to contribute to these measures. They are supposed to practice "tough love", ignoring any complaints from the child and writing brief, emotionally distant and distancing letters. They are recommended to put in place "exit plans", restrictive measures for abandoning children who don't follow the program. Admittedly, if a parent already believes that a child needs help, the parent is likely to go with the program. They are experts and know better.

Szalavitz cites one example of this put forward by the Teen Help organization:

. . .The idea here is that individuals control everything that happens to them in life. If you are raped, if you die in a plane crash, if you get a fatal illness: none of this happens if it wasn't what you "intended", according to the WWASP seminar philosophy. This ideology is pushed as a method of empowerment, as a way to avoid blaming others for one's problems.

— *Help at Any Cost*, Page 163

This is of course the philosophy of the Sturch in Philip José Farmer's *The Lovers* (1952, 1961) and *Timestop!* (1953, 1960). As Szalavitz points out, it is supposed to counteract the common ploy of blaming everyone else for one's own problems and not taking any personal responsibility; as Farmer pointed out through his Ozagenian character, it makes a great basis for absolute unrestrained power.

Even when dragged into court, these therapists seem to evade punishment. Aaron's case, for example, although to all intents and purposes a brutal killing, ended up with those indicted getting time served. There were so many that no one was responsible. (Wouldn't it be possible to get them for a "pattern of

racketeering" under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations [RICO] Act?)

Szalavitz cites as an example of the brutality of such places the Michael Skakel case, where under the customary self-denunciation pressure at his school, a typical facility like these except even more expensive, Skakel confessed to the murder of his sometime neighbor, Martha Moxley. Skakel was later tried and convicted of that murder; in his account of the trial ["Trail of Guilt"; reprinted in *Justice: Crimes, Trials, and Punishments*, Pages 400-426] Dominick Dunne cites the abuse and pretty much agrees with Szalavitz on the brutality of the school.

It is troubling to note that these "therapies" are grounded in reputable psychological theory. The therapeutic community has demonstrated a consistent policy of tolerating any behavior in the name of "helping a patient". This book has been criticized; it will keep people who need help from getting it. This kind of help?

GREYHOUND

by Lisa

<http://www.equinenet.org/heroes/greyhound.html>

Champion trotter Greyhound "was foaled in 1932." When he was sold, he only brought a few hundred dollars, in spite of being by a champion sire, Guy Abbey. Like Seattle Slew forty-three years later, he was too gawky to bring a high price. He won the 1935 Hambletonian. As a gelding, he raced until 1940, breaking record after record.

Together he and Rosalind, the filly of Born to Trot, broke the team record. Greyhound lived until 1965.

Greyhound had a 23 foot stride, plenty of speed and all the courage a race horse needs. He was easy to handle, very responsive to his driver, and could trot at a speed of 25 miles per hour. Nearly always in the money, and usually the winner, Greyhound became a crowd favorite. His style was to start each race out in front and stay there till the end. By the time he was retired in 1940, after seven years of racing, he had broken records for just about every distance from a quarter mile to two miles.

<http://www.mi-harness.com/publct/trtrtccen.html>

From September 1971 Hoof Beats
"The Trotter of the Century"

Greyhound even impressed Thoroughbred authorities enough for them to name him Horse of the Year, the only trotter ever to receive the honor.

This is a fascinating article and well worth reading. I wish I could have seen Greyhound race.

QUARTER HORSES

by Lisa

Quarter Horses are the first truly American breed of horse. Over a quarter of a mile, they are the fastest horses anywhere. They excel at

handling cattle because of their great cow sense. They are also noted for how quickly they can stop. Quarter Horses can be found in competitions ranging from rodeos to dressage. Anyone who has seen *Dances With Wolves* has seen a Quarter Horse. It was a Quarter Horse named Plain Justin Bar who played Cisco. Another Quarter Horse, Docs Keeping Time, played Black Beauty and even appeared in a rock music video, as well as playing the Black Stallion on TV. No typecasting for this horse!

I have seen these horses put on astonishing performances at the Horse Park. Like the Thoroughbred, their foundation blood came from Arab, Turk and Barb horses. Thoroughbreds like Janus, a grandson of the Godolphin Arabian, and Sir Archy also played a large part in early Quarter Horse breeding. Thoroughbred blood is still being used for Quarter Horses. Racing champion Tailor Fit is a descendant of noted Thoroughbred Raise A Native.

The first Quarter Horse races took place in 1674 in colonial Virginia.

RACING NEWS

by Lisa

Numbersixvalverde won the famous steeplechase, the Grand National. Last year he won the big Irish steeplechase. Forty horses started the race but only nine finished. There was one fatality, Tyneandtyneagain. Numbersixvalverde traces back to the Darley Arabian through legendary sire Nasrullah.

Siena's historic Palio race was won by the horse from Contrada Tartuca, Italian for tortoise. I found this very amusing. I was not able to discover the horse's name in several minutes of searching. Joe says the horse might not have a name. I think if the Palio winner doesn't have a name it ought to get one.

Artistic Fella won the million dollar Meadowlands Pace. He is a grandson of Horse Park champion Cam Fella.

Bernardini overpowered his opponents in what looked like an easy win in the Jim Dandy. It's a real pity his career will probably always be overshadowed by Barbaro's fate. I am in danger of falling big for Bernardini. I think what happened to Barbaro will make it hard for him to get the respect he deserves. His Preakness win will always have a question mark over it. A win in the Travers, though, could give him a real shot at being champion three-year-old.

PIERRE PLANTARD AND THE PRIORY OF SION

by Lee Gilliland

The main difficulty with *The Da Vinci Code* is that it is based on faulty history not the least part of which is the so-called Priory of Sion, supposedly an ancient secret order but in fact the work of a confidence trickster named Pierre Plantard. Something called the Order de Sion existed in the Middle Ages and something called

the Prieure du Sion existed from 1956 or thereabouts, but it doesn't look like they had much more than a name in common. I have the sneaking suspicion the resemblance was deliberate, used to give the appearance of legitimacy to a con.

In the book, the priory is an ancient brotherhood, founded in ca. 1099 to conserve the bloodline of Christ, when in fact it was established by Plantard in 1956 in a small French burg named Saint Julien-en-Genevois, "devoted to the Defence and Liberty of Low-Cost Housing". The incorporation papers are still available for viewing at the prefecture there. The Prieure de Sion was supposedly dissolved sometime after October 1956, following Plantard's conviction for 'détournement de mineurs' (yep, you got it — aiding and abetting the delinquency of). References to Pierre Plantard's criminal convictions are available for public inspection at the Sub-Prefecture of Saint Julien-en-Genevois, 4 Avenue de Geneve, 74164 saint Julien-en-Genevois, Haute-Savoie (Monsieur Serge Champanhet is the Secretary General of the Sub-prefecture for written enquiries — the letter dated 8 June 1956 by the Mayor of Annemasse to the Sub Prefect contained in File Number KM 94550, which holds the 1956 Priory of Sion Registration Documents, must be cited in the written enquiry). Plantard didn't know when to quit — in 1993 he got into hot water with a judge named Thierry Jean-Pierre because he claimed that Roger Patrice Pelat was a "Grand Master of the Priory of Sion" (the Judge was heading an investigation into Pelat's questionable financial practices).

The entire priory of Sion thing seems to have been a way for Plantard to legitimize himself as the descendant of the Merovingian dynasty, the one that founded Paris. Whether this was to make himself look better as a setup for some kind of scam is not clear, but judging from what I've been able to find out about the man, it would be the way to bet.

For further reading on the web:
priory-of-sion.com:

<http://priory-of-sion.com/psp/id84.html>

THE MARTIAN

by George Du Maurier

George Bell and Sons, 1897

Reviewed by Richard Dengrove

Most novels of the 1890s concerned with life on Mars used a style that resembled modern science fiction's, like Pope's *Journey to Mars* (1894) and Robert Crombie's *Plunge into Space* (1890). They were novels of derring do. While they may have been tinged with satire, so is modern science fiction.

Most of this novel's style does not resemble any of these. Instead, it resembles a Victorian novel like the ones older people, like me, were assigned to read in high school. Victorian novels, yecccc!!! I can hear some people say. They have a reputation for having a lot of useless verbiage.

I suspect that is a bad rap. We are just so used to fast action and plot driven novels that

we figure all verbiage is useless. We tend to forget the virtues of good character, description and theme.

The Martian was not the best of the Victorian novels by a longshot. It wasn't even the best of Du Maurier's novels. It lacks the timeless theme of *Trilby*. We are still compelled by how *Trilby* was hypnotized and forced to sing by the morally tone-deaf Svengali. There is nothing compelling like that in this novel. It is no wonder the novel has only been republished once since its 1897 publication date.

Nonetheless, I found *The Martian* eminently readable. Like many Victorian novels, the novel tells the story of a person. In this case, the entire life of Barty Josselyn.

This gives Du Maurier the chance to inject a lot of character into his novel. Along the way, Barty stops and interacts with all sorts of people. Like in the novels of Dickens, they span social strata. It isn't just the rich and noble.

It helps Du Maurier in developing character that the life bears close parallels with his own. Like Barty, he was an artist in Britain, France and Belgium. Like Barty, he lost the sight of one eye. Barty, however, dies before he can start losing his sight in the other eye.

Du Maurier delights in inserting quirks that interest us. One character that sticks out in my mind is one of Barty's teachers when he was boy in France, M. Bonzig. He meets out onerous punishments he never even bothers to remember much less enforce.

As an adult, Barty runs into M. Bonzig again. Bonzig has decided to become an artist who paints nothing but ships, boats and the sea, even though he has never seen the sea. Ultimately, his life turns into a tragic irony. When he finally travels to the sea, he drowns.

A more important character is Leah Gibson. She is half-Jewish. I am sure, at base, she is as much of a stereotype as the amoral, fully Jewish Svengali in *Trilby*. In contrast, her stereotype is loyal, businesslike and strong. As with Svengali, details flesh her out. For one thing, she is Du Maurier's ideal of beauty: a Classical face and a tall and slender figure, tall enough and slender enough to be fashionable right now.

So admirable is Leah the author is very much smitten with her. So is Barty. She is one Rebecca who gets her *Ivanhoe*. In exchange, Barty gets everything his other worldly and fun-loving person needs to deal effectively with the fame and money.

Which brings us to Barty. He is fun loving. As a child, he wows adults with his music, songs and his spirit of fun — even when it gets mischievous. Also, it helps that he is a beautiful child.

Later on, we see the one thing he can get serious about, art. While drinking, partying and whoring distracted him from soldiering, they can never distract him from art. Not even the loss of an eye can.

Du Maurier had a plus for bringing his characters home that most authors cannot avail themselves of. For much of his working life, he made his living as an illustrator. When he went to write novels, he illustrated them himself. I heard he sometimes did over a hundred

illustrations for some books. I heard for *The Martian* he did forty-eight. I don't know; I never counted them.

These illustrations increase our appreciation for the characters. They are like what he did for *Punch* or *Harper's*, character sketches. He was good at them. With a hint of caricature, he could bring out the character in anyone.

As well as giving character to his characters, Du Maurier gives his opinion a lot. In this, he was like a lot of Victorian novelists.

His opinion on some things does not go too much against the modern grain. He finds no problem with the 'lower' classes; he finds no problem even with socializing with them. He only objects to people with airs. He cannot even stick to that. At one point of the novel, we learn that he does not really object to them either.

In addition, Du Maurier is definitely fun loving.

With one view, he goes against the modern grain, however: he favors eugenics. Du Maurier has Barty advocate it in books he writes; and Robert Maurice, the narrator, follow it. While Maurice is not particularly ugly in the illos, he claims that he never got married because his looks would hinder the race. In Du Maurier's view, beauty, à la Plato is a good which must be bred into us.

I said at the beginning that *The Martian* is at bottom science fiction, a variation on the Mars novels that were being written in the 1890s. So far it has just been a regular Victorian novel.

Near the beginning, Du Maurier foreshadows this science fiction. We find out that Barty has very sensitive seeing and hearing. His most extraordinary ability, though, is that he knows instinctively where north is. Later on, he is distressed when he periodically loses the ability to detect north.

Around page 200, we find that Barty is possessed by the soul of a female Martian with the unoriginal name of Martia. At night, when he believes he is asleep, he discovers he has been writing letters to himself signed Martia.

She, of course, says that she was originally a Martian. The details make things even more curious. Her species were originally sea mammals like sea lions. However, they evolved into something more beautiful and intelligent. Among their abilities is sensing magnetic fields, like Barty does when he senses north.

In this respect, Du Maurier broke from the mold of Mars novels of the 1890s. Their Martians were little different from humans. It was only after H.G. Wells' *War of the Worlds* the next year, 1897, that that fashion changed and writing about non-human extraterrestrials once again became popular. For Du Maurier's part, he gets the jump on the new extraterrestrials.

Martia the Martian was part of Du Maurier's strategy to make his novel a later Victorian blockbuster. He often introduced into his novels the fashionable topics of the day. Hypnotism in *Trilby*, and Martians here. Maybe Wells did the same thing: he decided to come out with *War of the Worlds* because Martians were fashionable.

Similarly, Du Maurier introduced eugenics and reincarnation because they were fashionable

topics. Maybe reincarnation is not science fiction; however, it fits in. It is integral to Barty meeting with Martia. In fact, reincarnation may have been a more credible vehicle to Du Maurier and his readers than rockets.

While Mars was Martia's planet of origin, she had died and her soul, like others', had drifted among the planets. Finally, it landed on Earth.

However, though she was now in proximity to bodies, she had not chosen, as other souls, to be reincarnated and lose her memory. She stuck around for about a century, and possessed and experienced human beings.

Presently, Martia possesses Barty's body. That explains some of his abilities. Also, it explains Barty's future greatness. In her sleep writing, she tells Barty that she will dictate books to him that will change his world and make him world famous. He does as she bids. It may be just as well that Du Maurier ventures only to hint at the nature of these books. From the titles, however, they seem to be novels.

One wonders how this entity with such an insight into humans could, in one instance, be superficial. Martia is when she urges Barty to marry the aristocratic Julia Boyce rather than the plebeian, down-to-Earth Leah. Martia is infatuated with Julia's social status.

However, all in honesty, it doesn't really mar her character that much.

It does mar it that she advocates eugenics. Also, that her species, for 'moral' reasons, has practiced eugenics with a vengeance. All animals that are not useful or beautiful are destroyed. Of course, Du Maurier seems to agree with them.

After Barty writes Martia's books and they are published to public acclaim, Martia senses her mission has ended and decides to reincarnate into one of Barty's children, Marty.

Here we return to the more typical Victorian novel. In fact, it goes in for the bathos the better authors avoided. Marty falls, hurts herself and dies. Of course, Du Maurier might have figured this bathos would aid the blockbuster he wanted to write.

As far as I am concerned, the novel is more interesting before that when real enough people interact and a Martian possesses a human.

PALADIN OF SOULS

by Lois McMaster Bujold

New York: EOS, 2003

A review by Colleen R. Cahill

Medieval fantasies are a mix of pleasure and pain these days: there is so much dreck out there that a good piece seems an anomaly. And when you get a series, the story just seems to go on and on and on . . . But there is a reason this genre is so popular, as well written fantasy is more than swords and sorcery; it combines fantastic worlds and magic with believable characters and complex plots. This is just what Lois McMaster Bujold has done in her Hugo-winning novel *Paladin of Souls*, taking us again to the world of *The Curse of Chalion* but giving us a new view and quite different story, as a royal lady's attempt to hide from the past takes

some unexpected turns.

For the three years since the curse was lifted and her madness removed Dowager Royina Ista has been taking care of her aged mother. When the Provincara finally passes away, Ista feels trapped in Baocia by both her title and those who fear a return of her melancholy. After a chance meeting with a band of pilgrims, Ista is inspired to take her own journey to various religious sites, supposedly to pray for a grandson. In reality, Ista wants to go somewhere that has no memories for her and to leave the ghosts of her past behind. This includes leaving behind her current court, which she replaces with a divine of the Bastard, a troop of soldiers dedicated to the Daughter, and a farm-girl-turned courier as her lady-in-waiting. Traveling incognito as the widow of a minor lord, Ista seeks to leave her troubles behind, with no reminders of her life at court or of her part in a murder, nor of her time as a saint, a person touched by one of the five gods. For a while, Ista does find some relief, but soon she is plagued by dreams, ones that could be a portend of a dark future. When her company is overtaken by a band of raiding soldiers from Jokona, Ista finds that she is not as in control of her life as she hoped and that once again she is a tool of a god.

Paladin of Souls gives us a deeper look at the religion of Chalion and the pantheon of five gods whose gifts are often seen as having barbs in them. In the past, Ista was "blessed" with the attentions of the Mother, but now the Bastard finds her interesting. This god is the son of a demon and has a greater sense of humor than the Mother, one that Ista often finds annoying, especially as she seems to be the brunt of the joke. Bujold also gives us more insights into the workings of the religious military units through Ferda and Foix dy Gura, soldiers in service to the Daughter who appeared in the previous book. The introduction of Liss, once a message courier but now the rough-around-the-edges handmaiden to Ista, reveals more of the lives of the common people, such as farmers and servants.

Ista's capture by enemy forces and rescue by a border lord brings out not only the clash between countries and religions, as the Jokona's consider the Bastard a heresy punishable by death, but also a mystery. There is definitely something wrong at Castle Porifors, something that circles around the Lord, his wife and his half-brother. As Ista slowly unwinds the riddles that hold two men barely alive, she discovers an evil that goes back to the time of the Golden General of Jokona, an evil that the Bastard has chosen her to erase.

There is plenty of fun and romance in this book, with a remorseful but vigorous Ista trying to reach beyond the errors of her past to a happier future. You need not read *The Curse of Chalion* to enjoy this title, as the stories are only loosely linked. It is not surprising this won a Hugo, as Bujold gives us a story that has meat on its bones and a page-turning plot is sure to satisfy those cravings for a good medieval fantasy. So next time that hunger hits you, pick up *Paladin of Souls*; you will find it well worth

the time.

THE ELECTRIC LIFE OF MICHAEL FARADAY

by Alan Hirshfeld,

(Walker & Company, 2006,

258 pages/indexed, \$24.00,

ISBN-139780802714701 &

ISBN-100802714706)

Reviewed by Jim Sullivan

Here's the life story of Michael Faraday. He was a lower class, Englishman, born in September 1791 in a little community later to become a part of London. Though apprenticed to a bookbinder, Faraday's first love was science. Not formally educated, he read a lot of science and attended many public lectures on the various subjects in that field.

Then one day, he accidentally met Humphry Davy — that era's star scientist, about a dozen years older than Faraday. Primarily a chemistry whiz, Davy immediately took a liking to the passionate-for-anything-scientific Faraday. Davy took the young uneducated, science enthusiast under wing.

Faraday began doing research assistance for Davy and other science work at the Royal Institution of Great Britain in London. Davy helped Faraday get this, eventually paid, position. Soon, Davy was knighted and with his wealthy wife began traveling the world. On their trip around Europe, Sir Humphry took his assistant along. Faraday marveled at the sights and learned a lot in the capitals of the continent. But he suffered, too, from ill treatment at the hands of the snobbish, condescending Lady Davy, whom Faraday came to loathe.

After that tour, Faraday returned to his own science work at the Royal Institution where he would remain for more than four decades. Little by little, this untutored lad did more of his own work learning more and more about science, particularly electricity and magnetism, among many subjects. As he progressed in his knowledge through experimentation, academic scientists more and more accepted him. Faraday's experiments, in fact, were proving groundbreaking. The meticulous young scientist was now publishing often. Moreover, he was giving popular science lectures at the Royal Institution.

If Faraday received any complaints from the scientific community, they usually concerned his inability to explain his work mathematically. In short, he was untrained in this field, which was considered, then as now, essential in describing experiments and results. Then, along came a worshipful admirer: the Scotsman James Clerk Maxwell. He knew math exceedingly well. Generously, he took Faraday's electric, magnetic, and other scientific papers and put them into mathematical formula. Then Faraday's work was much more widely accepted. Maxwell went on to science fame in his own right, too.

The scientist, Faraday, spent most of his life experimenting, publishing, and lecturing. However, he did find time to marry his beloved Sarah. She was a member in good standing with the same faith, Sandemanian, as Faraday. The

religion was named for Robert Sandeman, a Protestant faith leader whose followers believed in being humble, pious, and though not poor, not rich either. The newly married couple would take up residence in a second story apartment in the Royal Institution where they would remain for the balance of his working life.

As he aged, he did less and less work because his memory was slipping and experiments proved difficult. On August 25, 1867, Michael Faraday died. As he'd earlier requested, it was a private, family-only funeral. The man was humble onto death and burial.

The author writes in the Epilogue: "During a career that spanned more than four decades, Faraday laid the experimental foundations of our technical society; made important advances in chemistry, optics, geology, and metallurgy; developed prescient theories about space, force, and light; pressed for a scientifically literate populace years before science had been deemed worthy of common study; and manned the barricades against superstition and pseudoscience. He sought no financial gain or honorifics for his discoveries." Faraday is remembered today, according to the author, with the use of the term "'faraday' as the agreed-upon standard unit of electric charge involved in electrolysis" and the term "'farad' that measures an electronics component's charge-storing capacity."

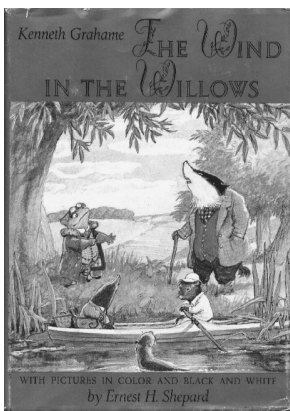
Alan Hirshfeld, the author, is a physics professor at U. Mass. He has also penned the volume: *Parallax: The Race to Measure the Cosmos*.

Recommended.

WIND IN THE WILLOWS

Taral Wayne

1959 50th. Anniversary Edition



Wind in the Willows was written in 1909 and is arguably one of the most important works of children's fiction in the English language, alongside James Barrie's "Peter Pan" and Lewis Carol's Alice books. It is even favoured with some of the best work by the Edwardian era illustrator Ernest Sheppard, which are traditionally always published with editions of the book. The 1959, fiftieth anniversary edition that I have is a particularly nice one, with all the

b&w and colour illustrations, and was extremely common in public libraries when I was young.

The book is about a community of small animals living in a very English rural setting. The Mole loses his way and stumbles on the Water Rat, rowing his boat, thus becoming a member of the community. Mole is everyman, an innocent. Rat is the decent and hardworking lower class type, what we would have called middle class really. The actual lower classes are represented by the Weasels and other wild animals who live in the Wood. Badger is the elderly gentleman, keeper of tradition and arbiter of manners. A man whose advice is to be listened to. A bit of a Colonel Blimp too, to be less sentimental about it. The real star of the show is Toad, though. Toad is the rich gentleman type, long on family tradition and money, but woefully sort of brains. Whatever newfangled fad he hears of, he throws himself into with the abandon of a moth for the flame. He nearly kills himself and gets the story underway when he becomes infatuated with motorcars.

Between bouts of Toad's madness, as he's arrested for reckless driving and theft of an unattended motor carriage, wanders a penniless fugitive through the countryside, and slowly effects a (limited) reformation through a series of outrageous adventures, the book is actually quite lyrical. A lost child is returned to its parents by the intervention of Pan, but a fog of forgetfulness erases the transcendental experience from the minds of all. (Except the reader, of course.) Seasons change and are reflected in the activities of the animals, particularly Rat who composes poetry and little songs to express his mood. There is serious danger as well, as when Mole foolishly ventures into the Wild Wood to find the isolated dwelling place of Badger.

It is a wonderful book, and one that I have returned to throughout my life.

Four authorized sequels by William Horwood

In 1994, William Horwood began a series of sequels, with *The Willows in Winter*. Not quite to the same standard as the original, they are nevertheless enjoyable and continue the lives of the Riverbankers in a worthy fashion. A couple of animated films have been made in the last ten years or so, based on the Horwood books. There is also a very amusing series of Claymation cartoons based on the Grahame original, made in England, called *Tales of the Riverbank*. Disney also made "The Adventures of Mr. Toad" around 1950. It is a pretty trivial rendition, eliminating all but the comic antics of Toad, and can be ignored.

TWIX WHITE CHOCOLATE

Review by Johnny Carruthers

[originally on

<http://chocolatescifi.livejournal.com/>]

Not long after the Dark Chocolate Twix ended its limited run on the shelves, Mars decided to swing to the other end of the

chocolate spectrum, and released the White Chocolate Twix. (There may have been some overlap at some stores, depending on what they had in stock.)

As is the case with both the original and the Dark Chocolate Twix bars, the White Chocolate Twix bar starts with a long, slender vanilla cookie, topped with caramel. This version is then enrobed in white chocolate, and as usual, there are two bars to a package.

The white chocolate is pale ivory in color, as is the case with the higher quality white chocolates. It has a creamy, mild, sweet flavor to it. As is usually the case, the cookie's presence is more felt than tasted, bringing a substantial crunch to the bar. And the caramel is very firm, very chewy, and is the last flavor to leave your taste buds.

The vanilla cookie was perhaps a poor choice for this bar. The bar would have benefited from a chocolate cookie; something that would have made a stronger contrast for the white chocolate. Or if not a chocolate cookie, at least something that isn't as bland as the vanilla cookie.

As I mentioned, this was a limited edition, and the production run has probably long sold out by now (unless there was some enterprising entrepreneur who bought a large quantity and is now selling the bars on Ebay). It did not show up in the recent Twix mini-mix bag, which may or may not be an indicator of future releases.

HUGO PICKS

by divers sundry hands —



Ah . . .
It's Hugo
voting time
in Fandom!

by Johnny Carruthers

[originally at

<http://purpleranger.livejournal.com>]

The final ballot for this year's Hugo Awards has been out for a couple of months now. I thought it was time to post my annual picks for the Hugo Awards.

I've been making my picks known for a few years now, in various fora. This, in spite of the fact that my picks are right only about one third of time. I've joked once or twice that announcing my picks for the Hugos is the kiss of death for those picks. If I really thought that was the case, I would probably announce as my picks the nominee that I least wanted to win, and see if that had any effect.

Okay, my success rate at picking the winners isn't all that great. That won't stop me from announcing my picks. I have way too much fun doing this. So without further ado, here are my choices for this year.

2006 HUGO AWARDS:

Best Novel: There is rarely any method to my madness when it comes to making my picks. Most of the time, it's the nominee that I like best. Other times, when I'm not familiar with all of the nominees in a category, I may make a pick purely on a gut feeling. This time, it's a gut feeling.

My Pick: *Old Man's War* by John Scalzi

Best Novella: I wouldn't call this a gut feeling, but one of the nominees won the Nebula Award in this category a few weeks ago. I suspect this might be one of those instances where the Hugo and Nebula voters think alike.

My Pick: "Magic For Beginners" by Kelly Link

Best Novelette: Easy choice on this one. I had to go with the nominee who had the brass cojones to lift the title from one of Isaac Asimov's best-known works. For that matter, the title was originally used by Otto Binder, and both Asimov's anthology and Binder's story are fondly remembered by long-time readers. Let's see if Doctorow's story will be equally fondly remembered years from now.

My Pick: "I, Robot" by Cory Doctorow

Best Short Story: Sometimes it's the story that gets you, sometimes it's the title. This time, it's the title.

My Pick: "The Clockwork Atom Bomb" by Dominic Green

Best Related Book: I saw my pick in this category in my local library, and I have checked it out several times in the past few months. Yes, I think it's a rather fascinating tome. Sooner or later, I'm going to have to break down and purchase my own copy. (This was also the only one of my nominations in this category to make the final ballot, so it's an easy choice.)

My Pick: *Science Fiction Quotations* by Gary Westfahl

Best Dramatic Presentation, Long Form: I'm faced with a tough choice here, because ALL of the nominees are not just good, they're damn good. This time, it's another gut feeling.

I am hoping that this year won't see the start of a trend repeating from a few years back. When the *Lord of the Rings* movies were on the Hugo ballot a few years ago, I got the impression that some voters went, "Ooooh! Tolkien! LOTR!" and didn't even look at any of the other nominees in the category. I also think that since Peter Jackson felt that he was making one really, really long movie (instead of three merely long movies), LOTR should only have been eligible once, after the last installment had been released. In a similar vein, I hope that the Hugo voters this year will not automatically go, "Ooooh! Narnia!" and ignore any of the other

nominees.

My Pick: *Serenity*

Best Dramatic Presentation, Short Form: Now that *Doctor Who* has made a comeback, I would really like to see it win a Hugo. But with three different episodes on this year's ballot, I don't know if this will be the year.

I also noticed the continuation of a rather disturbing trend – the inclusion of (for lack of a better term) a frivolous nominee. I suspect that the appearance of these frivolous nominees is the work of some fans who are still upset over *The Split* in the BDP category a few years ago. I have no hard evidence, but this seems like their way of showing their dislike for *The Split* by nominating something that really shouldn't be on the ballot.

My Pick: "Dalek" — *Doctor Who*

Best Professional Editor: I'm going to start sounding like a broken record here, so if you've heard this before, you can skip to the next category. How many times has Dr. Schmidt been nominated in this category? I find it hard to believe that he has not been THE best at least once in all that time. I'm really hoping that this is finally the year that he wins the Hugo.

Come on, even Susan Lucci finally won her Emmy (after what, 17 tries?). Maybe if Dr. Schmidt finally does win this year, the appropriate presenter should be Ms. Lucci.

My Pick: **Stanley Schmidt**

Best Professional Artist: As always, both of the artist categories are going to be tough picks. I think it will come down to a flip of the dice, a roll of the coin.

My Pick: **Donato Giancola**

Best Semiprozine: I wasn't too surprised when one of the British nominees won last year, given the site. It would be nice to see someone other than Science Fiction's Worst Dressed Sentient Being (aka Charles Brown) walking up to receive the award in this category. (I don't have anything against *Locus* personally; I just feel that it should not automatically be the winner in this category every year.)

My Pick: *Emerald City*

Best Fanzine: It would be so much easier if one of the fanzines which I nominated med the final ballot. At least I could say something like, "I'm going with the only one of my nominations to make the ballot." Unfortunately, I can't do that this year, so it may come down to another random choice.

My Pick: *Challenger*

Best Fan Writer: Okay, here's my annual rant on the subject. There is no way that Dave Langford has been the best in this category every year since 1989. No one is that good — not even Harlan Ellison. If the voters can't even consider voting for someone else in this category, then it is so stagnant that the category needs to be eliminated.

I was a little surprised when three of my nominees made the final ballot. Of course, that

makes who gets my #1 vote a little difficult, but I think I will go with someone who should have been on the final ballot much more often than he has been.

My Pick: **John Hertz**

Best Fan Artist: See my earlier comments in Best Professional Artist. They hold true for this category as well.

My Pick: **Teddy Harvia**

John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer: I usually don't make a pick for this award, because I'm usually unfamiliar with the nominees. This year, though, one of the nominees is also a nominee for the Best Novel award. Somehow, I suspect that might give him the inside edge.

My Pick: **John Scalzi**

As usual, it will be interesting to see how close I come to picking the winners. I think I got four correct last year. I'm hoping for at least five this year.

by Milt Stevens

Best Novel

1. *Accelerando* by Charles Stross
2. *Old Man's War* by John Scalzi
3. *A Feast for Crows* by George R. R. Martin
4. *Learning the World* by Ken MacLeod
5. *Spin* by Robert Charles Wilson

Stross is the master of technobabble and can be counted on for a totally screwy story. I like totally screwy stories. There are an awful lot of ideas in *Accelerando*, and some of them may even be real. I'm not really sure which ones those might be.

Even though I ranked the Scalzi novel second, I thought it was excellent. When you think of novels about interstellar war you think of *Starship Troopers* and *Forever War*. Scalzi's novel is different from either of those novels. I certainly voted for Scalzi for the Campbell Award.

Best Novella

1. "Inside Job" by Connie Willis
2. "The Little Goddess" by Ian McDonald
3. "Magic for Beginners" by Kelly Link
4. "Burn" by James Patrick Kelley
5. "Identity Theft" by Robert J. Sawyer

The idea behind the Willis story is funnier the more you think about it. Two sceptics are so intent on debunking spiritualists that they are even willing to channel the spirit of a famous sceptic to do it. Right.

Best Novelette

1. "Two Hearts" by Peter S. Beagle
2. "The Calorie Man" by Paolo Bacigalupi
3. "The King of Where-I-Go" by Howard Waldrop
4. "I, Robot" by Cory Doctorow
5. "TelePresence" by Michael A. Burstein

The story by Peter Beagle is a moving story.

It's the clear winner.

Best Short Story

1. "Tk'tk'tk" by David D. Levine
2. "The Clockwork Atom Bomb" by Dominic Green
3. "Singing My Sister Down" by Margo Lanigan
4. "Down Memory Lane" Mike Resnick
5. "Seventy-Five Years" by Michael A. Burstein

David Levine is turning out to be a rather impressive writer. I liked "Tale of the Golden Eagle," and I like his story this year too.

by Tom Veal

(I've summarized Tom's recommendations for reasons of space, since he discussed every nominee at some length. For his commentary in full, check out his blog, which is at:

http://stromata.typepad.com/stromata_blog/
— JTM)

Best Novel

1. *Learning the World* by Ken MacLeod
2. *Old Man's War* by John Scalzi
3. *Spin* by Robert Charles Wilson
(Unable to finish: *A Feast for Crows* by George R. R. Martin and *Accelerando* by Charles S. Stross)

Best Novella

1. "Burn" by James Patrick Kelly
2. "Inside Job" by Connie Willis
3. "The Little Goddess" by Ian MacDonald
4. "Magic for Beginners" by Kelly Link
5. "Identity Theft" by Robert J. Sawyer

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1. "The Calorie Man" by Paolo Bacigalupi
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3. "I, Robot" by Cory Doctorow
4. "The King of Where-I-Go" by Howard Waldrop
5. "TelePresence" by Michael Burstein

SEIUN AWARDS

[From Trufen.net]

Best Translated Novel

Diaspora by Greg Egan

Best Translated Short Story

"The Human Front" by Ken MacLeod

PRIX AURORA AWARDS

Reported by Lloyd Penney a rapporté

Best Long-Form Work in English/Meilleur livre en anglais

Cagebird, Karin Lowachee (Warner Aspect, Apr/2005)

Meilleur livre en francais/Best Long-Form Work in French

Alégracia et le Serpent d'Argent, Dominic Bellavance (Les Six Brumes)

Best Short-Form Work in English/Meilleure nouvelle en anglais

"Transubstantiation", Derwin Mak (*Northwest*

Passages: A Cascadian Anthology, Windstorm Creative)

Meilleure nouvelle en francais/Best Short-Form Work in French

"Montréal: trois uchronies", Alain Ducharme (*Solaris* 155)

Best Work in English (Other)/Meilleur ouvrage en anglais (Autre)

Tesseracts Nine: New Canadian Speculative Fiction, Nalo Hopkinson and Geoff Ryman, editors (Edge Publishing, July/2005)

Meilleur ouvrage en francais (Autre)/Best Work in French (Other)

Solaris, réd. Joël Champetier (www.revue-solaris.com)

Artistic Achievement — Accomplissement artistique

Lar deSouza [www.lartist.com]

Fan Achievement (Publication) — Accomplissement fanique (Publication)

The Royal Swiss Navy Gazette, Garth Spencer, ed. (www.eFanzines.com/RSNG)

Fan Achievement (Organizational) — Accomplissement fanique (Organisation)

Barbara Schofield (TT Masquerade)

Fan Achievement (Other) — Accomplissement fanique (autre)

Urban Tapestry, filksinging

[www.urbantapestry.org]

Well done all, and there are pointy trophies with some new names on them, which is good to see.

FANZINES

and Furthermore . . . #7 May 25, 2006, #8 June 18, 2006, #9 June 27, 2006, #10 July 5, 2006, #11 July 19, 2006, #12 August 1, 2006

John Purcell, 3744 Marielene Circle, College Station, TX 77845-3926 USA

j_purcell54@yahoo.com

<http://www.efanzines.com>

Beyond Bree June 2006, July 2006

Nancy Martsch, Post Office Box 55372, Sherman Oaks, CA 91413-5372 USA

beyondbree@yahoo.com

Not available for The Usual; \$12/year, \$15 in envelope or overseas.

Hey, it has some of Paul's drawings!

brg 46 June 2006

Bruce Gillespie, 8 Howard Street, Greensborough, VIC 3088 AUSTRALIA

gandc@mira.net

eI # 27 August 2006

Earl Kemp, Post Office Box 6642, Kingman, AZ 86402-6642 USA

earlkemp@citlink.net

<http://www.efanzines.com>

In a Prior Lifetime #12 June 2006, #13 July 2006

John Purcell, 3744 Marielene Circle, College Station, TX 77845-3926 USA

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<http://www.efanzines.com>

The Knarley Knews #118 June 2006

Henry & Letha Welch, 1525 16th Avenue, Grafton, WI 53024-2017 USA

welch@msoe.edu

<http://www.msoe.edu/~welch/tkk.html>

MT Void V. 24 #49 June 2, 2006 — V. 25 #4 July 28, 2006

Mark and Evelyn Leeper, 80 Lakeridge Drive, Matawan, NJ 07747-3839 USA

eleeper@optonline.net

mleeper@optonline.net

<http://www.geocities.com/evelynleeper>

Nice Distinctions #14 June 2006

Arthur L. Hlavaty, 206 Valentine Street, Yonkers, NY 10704-4861 USA

hlavaty@panix.com

<http://www.maroney.org/hlavaty/>

<http://www.efanzines.com>

Opuntia # 61.1 June 2006, #61.3 July 2006, #61.5 Late July 2006

Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta T2P 2E7 CANADA

Peregrine Nations V. 6 #1 April 2006

Jan G. Stinson, P. O. Box 248, Eastlake, MI 49626-0248 USA

tropicsf@earthlink.net

<http://www.efanzines.com>

Hey, it has some of Paul's drawings!

What do you mean I said this before?

Pixel #3 July 2006, #4 August 2006

David Burton, 5227 Emma Drive, Lawrence, IN 46236-2742 USA

catchpenny@mw.net

<http://www.efanzines.com>

Vanamonde # 638-647

John Hertz, 236 S. Coronado Street, No. 409, Los Angeles, CA 90057-1456 USA

Visions of Paradise #106

Robert Michael Sabella, 24 Cedar Manor Court, Budd Lake, NJ 07828-1023 USA

bsabella@optonline.net

<http://www.efanzines.com>

<http://visionofparadise.blogspot.com>

The Zine Dump #12

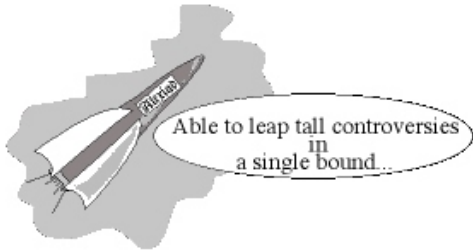
Guy H. Lillian III, 8700 Millicent Way #150, Shreveport, LA 71115-2264 USA

ghliiii@yahoo.com

<http://www.challzine.net>

CON NEWS

According to various reports collected by Tom Veal and others, a bid committee has been formed to bid for a Seattle in 2011 WorldCon. Meanwhile, the DC in 2011 Committee has apparently decided to defer their bid to 2012 because of problems with their site (a lack of nearby hotels). Whether DC in 2011, or 2012 will have to face off with San Diego, or Diego in 2012 remains to be seen.

Letters, we get letters


From: **John Hertz** June 3, 2006
 236 S. Coronado Street, No. 409, Los Angeles, CA 90057-1456 USA
Best Fan Writer Hugo Nominee

Robert Conquest wrote decent s-fpoetry too, see *Vanamonde* 658.
 ГЛАСВАЙТЕ ЗА ЧАРА* ЗА ПРЕДСЕДАТЕЛА!
 *Curiously, he's the "Tsar", not the "King". So was Boris. So was Krum.

I had to ask him to write "Vote for the Tsar for President!" in Bulgarian. Alas, he's not running.

July 17, 2006

Gosh, thanks for the recommendation. Sheryl Birkhead is right about the Rotsler Award. There's already a Best Fan Artist Hugo. It does not require voting only on the past year's work; but the Rotsler is given for long-time wonder-working. We certainly hope some at least of the more recent stars will keep twinkling.

About time capsules, remember the museum in Niven & Pournelle's *The Mote in God's Eye*. Art classics are also a kind of "time capsule". Consider Dante — or Bach — or Hiroshige.

From: **Janine G. Stinson** June 9, 2006
 Post Office Box 248, Eastlake, MI 49626-0248 USA
tropicsf@earthlink.net

Hi Joe and Lisa / Hi Lisa and Joe (equal opportunity greeting), This is, sadly, becoming a habit, missing the editorial deadline of your fanzine. Am I channeling Douglas Adams?

Re: Regina Stinson, no relation.

Sheryl Birkhead, re: circus peanuts, they'r orange, firmer than marshmallows, and do contain gelatin. Say it with me: oh, foo!

Jeff Boman: I've read some of Misty Lackey's Valdemar novels, but prefer her Diana Tregarde series (a sort of psychic detective character). Re: comics, have you seen the Doc Samson limited series (5 issues total) that Marvel is doing now, with Paul Di Filippo writing the story? I thought they were very cool (I've seen the first two, courtesy of Paul). The way Doc is drawn reminds me of (forgive me if I get the name wrong, I'm relying on memory here)

Barry Smith's Conan, back in the day. I really liked *those* Conan comics.

As for Lackey's RiverCon GoH turn, Joe, is that con the reason she no longer attends cons (or does so very rarely)?

And the sound of the gripping hand ought to bear a resemblance to fyunch*click*, I think. <g>

Don't ask Steve Francis (co-chair of the late lamented RiverCon) about Mercedes Lackey. He gets the twitches. I had understood that her reticence towards interacting with fans in general stemmed from bad experiences with a fan of the Diana Tregarde series who failed to note that it was only a story. Da Vinci Code Syndrome?

— JTM

From: **Darrell Schweitzer** June 19, 2006
 6644 Rutland Street, Philadelphia, PA 19149-2128 USA
darrells@comcast.net

Thanks for the new *Alexiad*. On theological matters, I think Alexis Gilliland's explanation of the Gospel of Judas is a trifle over-elaborate. The idea that Judas did it on Christ's instructions smooths out a major kink in Christian theology, i.e. the question of why Judas is a bad guy and deserves to be ground eternally in Satan's jaws, as described by Dante. If the crucifixion of Christ was required as part of the Divine Plan, and God, who is all knowing, realized this at the Beginning of Time, then wasn't Judas just doing his bit to carry out the Plan? It was a dirty job, but somebody had to do it. God, when he created Judas, knew perfectly well that Judas would do this, and therefore knew that the infant Judas would grow up to betray Christ, commit suicide, and be damned. This sort of thing leads you down the slippery slope of Predetermination and other heresies

Catholics counter this with Free Will, i.e. the idea that we are given Free Will so that we may freely choose Good. That is only possible if it is also possible to choose evil. This may cause collateral damage in damned souls, but this is the only way for the choice of Goodness to mean anything. Therefore God just looked out for a prospective damned soul, knowing that Judas would freely choose to betray Christ, and took advantage of this. Nothing goes to waste with an all-knowing God.

But the Gospel of Judas avoids such acrobatics. It's a lot more straightforward. Judas is a necessary cog in the machine. He is not evil. He presumably went to Heaven, even if he got a bad rap on Earth.

The Church will of course ignore it. This is hardly the first or last of the apocryphal Gospels. No need for a cover-up or some vast, *Da Vinci Code* style conspiracy. Just a few shrugs and dismissive comments on the evening news, and a couple weeks later no one cares anymore.

Which does raise the burning question of our time: why haven't more people, despite the hype, realized exactly how silly *The Da Vinci Code* is?

I saw the movie, despite the warnings of well-meaning friends. My conclusion was "This isn't as good as *North by Northwest*. Hitchcock could have done it in an hour and a half, better, and he wouldn't have taken the McGuffin so seriously." It IS basically an inferior rendition of the Hitchcock formula of the innocent who finds himself accused of a crime and involved in a conspiracy he doesn't understand, then chased through exotic places while trying to find someone he can trust. Today, Tom Hanks. 50 years ago, Cary Grant.

But let's have a look at that McGuffin. We will overlook the stretch of the Long Arm of Coincidence that Sophie, who is assigned to help the Hanks character solve the murder, just happens to be the "sole direct descendant" of Jesus Christ.

Consider the claim itself. Jesus married Mary Magdalene and had a daughter by her. The daughter survives. She has, let us say, three children. Now there are three equally descended grandchildren of Christ. These, between them, let us say, manage to produce eight great-grandchildren who live to reproduce. These then, let us just estimate conservatively, produce sixteen great-great grandchildren, all of whom breed "true." There is **no** statement that only the firstborn is it, and if we're talking of the "purity of the bloodline," then a younger sibling has just as pure a bloodline as an older one.

We will also overlook the obvious implication that whatever was special in that bloodline must have diluted awfully fast, because the line was transmitted, we are told, through the Merovingian house of Gaul — a bunch of barbarians, mediocrities, and vegetables, the last useless representative of which was deposed by Pepin the Short with permission from (exquisite irony here), the Roman pope.

Never mind that. Collateral lines should be spreading all over the place like fracture lines in a broken windshield. By the 21st century, all of western Europe and much of the Mediterranean world would be equally descended from Christ and Mary M., including, and not restricted to, the current pope, the Hanks character, the entire membership of Opus Dei, the masochistic monk, the entire French police force, Sophie, and the hooker down the street. It is clear that descendants of Christ have siblings. Sophie had a brother, before he was conveniently killed in a car crash.

If you figure backwards, that you had two parents, four grand-parents, eight great-grandparents, etc. and take that back about a thousand years, the members of your family alone should outnumber the entire population of the Earth. So, where are all the missing people? I think Dan Brown would have us believe that Opus Dei killed them all, because they were the descendants of Christ. That's **some** hardworking conspiracy!

We might also point out that prior to the

invention of DNA testing, there would be no way to prove that anybody is descended from Mary Magdalene. So they find this medieval crypt with some old bones in it. Whose are they? How could anybody, over the centuries, know?

Let us suppose modern scientists determine that the woman in the crypt actually IS a remote ancestor of Sophie (and half the population of Europe). How can they prove who the father of the line was? The DNA of God is not available for study. Even if you got a sample from the Shroud of Turin, and that somehow proved to be old enough, that would not prove that the man on the shroud was really Christ. I don't think there are any more relics of the Blood of the Circumcision around anymore, much less the Holy Foreskin. It would take a miracle. If the "last living descendant" really could walk on water (which, it is explicitly shown, she cannot) then the Church might have something to worry about.

Otherwise, despite the fact this woman has no motivation to do so, let us say she goes public and announces, "I am the last descendant of Jesus and Mary Magdalene. The Catholic Church is a lie."

Reporters snicker. The Vatican says shrugs it off, or, if it is really subtle, produces rival claimants who have obviously come out of mental hospitals, showing that there's at least one in every looney-bin. Late-night talk show hosts make a few jokes. There is a skit on *Saturday Night Live*.

Two weeks later it is old news and everybody forgets.

As I said, Hitchcock could have done a lot better. That **anyone** has taken this silly farrago seriously is a tribute to the world-class promotional campaign *The Da Vinci Code* has received, and evidence that the public is not capable of thinking very deeply.

That part of *The Da Vinci Code* is based on Holy Blood, Holy Grail. See Lee Gilliland's analysis of that. Michel Lafosse, another forger (see above), also claims he is descended from Jesus and Mary Magdalene. The Sinister Conspirators of the Vatican wouldn't have to bother to go looking for "rival claimants"; those would come boiling out of the woodwork! See under Kathleen McGowan (who will no doubt say, "Why are you looking under me?").

—JTM

From: **Taral Wayne** June 20, 2006
254 Dunn Avenue Apt. 2111, Toronto,
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Got the latest ish and thought I should move my lazy ass to acknowledge it.

I don't have much to say, but the item about finding a time-vault in Naples caught my eye. Actually, a library has been found, but last I heard it was still mostly unexcavated, and it's

unclear whether there's much to be found there. Whatever scrolls might have been in the wealthy insula's owner could have been carbonized beyond legibility. Another possibility is that the library may contain nothing but manuscripts we know well already.

L. Calpurnius Piso Caesonius, Julius Caesar's father-in-law, the guy who owned the villa at Herculaneum, was a very avid Epicurean and the place contains a library of (otherwise lost) obscure Epicurean books. The texts can be read with infrared imaging.

As if some catastrophe overwhelmed New York and a thousand years later someone's library was found intact in a basement, freakishly preserved. What would the future literary historian likely find?

Probably the same tiresome old Stephen King, Tom Clancy, Anne Rice, Tom Wolfe, Elmore Leonard, at the higher end of the literary spectrum perhaps Steinbeck, Salinger, maybe Mark Twain, perhaps even a little Raymond Chandler. There might be the odd lost work by one of these worthies. The rest would likely be junk best sellers or B-list fiction that only scholars would find interest in.

But it might be worse. It might be the library of a fan. Imagine finding a treasure trove of Pohl, Anderson, Ballard, Heinlein, Bester, Del Rey, Delany, Le Guin, and Ellison, probably none of which anyone will have heard of, a thousand years from now. What possible sense could they make of it?

They should be grateful for this insight into "A Way of Life" just off the Bloch . . .

I'm reminded of the story about the time scoop that brought back a man from the future. He was an ordinary sort who didn't have any idea of the social issues of his day or the world situation but he did know what was on the news; that two actors had reconciled or split up or something like that.

— JTM

Nice Schirm illos. I've always liked Marc's work, and don't think I need justify my high opinion on a long standing, fruitful friendship. About the only thing you can say to the revelation he's never won a Hugo (or that Steve Stiles or Dan Steffan have never won Hugos for their fanart) is that Hugos must be consolation prizes for runners-up. The best are too good to be widely recognized for it, QED.

From: **Steven H Silver** June 20, 2006
707 Sapling Lane, Deerfield, IL 60015-3969 USA
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Best Fan Writer Hugo Nominee

I generally don't comment on reviews, but I did want to make a note on your commentary on

Ron Goulart's Groucho series. I read the first one, *Groucho Marx, Master Detective*, when it first came out and was underwhelmed. My problem with it was that Goulart's representation of Groucho wasn't that of the man, but rather of the character he portrayed on the screen. Now, granted, from all reports Groucho became more and more like that character as he grew older, but in the time frame these novels are set, there was a distinction between Groucho the private individual, and Groucho the showman (see Stefan Kanfer's *Groucho*, Simon Louvish's *Monkey Business*, and any of the books written by Groucho or his collections of letters). I think I may have read the second book in the series before giving up on it entirely.

As it happens, I had just finished watching the excellent documentary "The Marx Brothers in a Nutshell" and Gabe Kaplan's version of "Groucho: A Life in Review" when I read your commentary (I also just watched "Duck Soup" with my eight year old). I've also been working on an alternate history in which the eldest Marx Brother, Manfred, does not die in infancy and goes on to perform in the act (Hummo, Chico, Harpo, Gummo, and Zeppo) and Julius takes a completely different turn. Although you can see some of the showman Groucho in Julius's character, he isn't the Groucho of the films as portrayed in Goulart's books (and my version of this ah is very different than what you did a few years ago).

I'll see you at Conglomeration.

Odd, because I've also read Love, Groucho (his letters to his alcoholic daughter), and Hector Arce's Groucho, as well as the other collections, not to mention Leo Rosten's essay on him, and it seemed to me that he would act like that in real life.

"What I did" was to give Manfred Marx all the acting, and the other brothers went various ways. Julius, for example, became a doctor, and then a famous fannish letterhack, instead of becoming Groucho. The guys on the DuckList (Marx Brothers email list) loved it.

— JTM

From: **Joy V. Smith** June 23, 2006
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Thanks much for all the reviews. I haven't read Martin's *Dying of the Light*, but I enjoyed *Tuf Voyaging*, which I kept. (It was people praising it and talking about the cats that enticed me to try it.) I no longer think exotic strange men are romantic the way I did when I was young and foolish and read romantic novels.

I don't see any point in waiting to look at time capsules. Open them, enjoy them, rewrap them, and maybe add something — with

provenance. Should we dump the stuff that disintegrated? I like the idea of our posterity tracking down Voyager.

Speaking of the complex backgrounds of gaming, I read something recently — and I wish I could remember where — that computer and other games teach more than manual dexterity (always a flawed argument, I thought) to kids. The author pointed out that kids have to remember characters, abilities, etc.; he also said that TV shows today require a lot more concentration than early TV dramas. There are a lot more subplots and long-running story arcs.

I wasn't aware of the Groucho Marx mysteries, though I've seen a number of examples of new writers recycling old characters. *The Empress of India: A Professor Moriarty Novel* sounds interesting, btw. As does *The Ghost Brigades*, a newer idea.

One Nation Under Therapy is scary. I saw in an advice column today that someone suggested drugging kids before taking them on planes so they'd be quiet . . . Another frightening book is *The True Stella Awards: Honoring Real Cases of Greedy Opportunists, Frivolous Lawsuits, and the Law Run Amok*. I see these in the newspaper now and then; a whole bookful would be staggering. (I think I'll curl up under the bed with a slurpie.)

Thanks to E.B. Frohvet for the article on the coelacanth. It'd be fascinating to learn the background of the old silver model. Thank you, Lisa, for the background on Barbaro; I did see stories and some footage. I wasn't aware of the horses whose legs might be too thin. (Don't ask me about German Shepherds being bred into triangles . . .)

In his essay on the coelacanth, Willy Ley mentions a woman from Florida who sent to the Smithsonian a scale from a bucketful she had bought to make souvenirs. Some time later they investigated their gift and discovered they had been sent a coelacanth scale — but she never wrote back.

LOCs. Thanks, Joe, for the info on the wireless computer card. (All my cables are in a tangle under the computer desk but against the wall and down a bit so that Xena doesn't get caught in them when she lies down under it.) Brad W. Foster, I love Duffy's angel wings! Btw, years ago our black and white Manx walked along the front edge of the gas stove when a burner was on and singed his whiskers off. They grew back a different color — either black to white or vice versa. I can never remember.

Lots more interesting, fun, and surprising facts in the letters, including vegetarian marshmallows. Can you still toast them? (I've got to get a firepit one of these days.) Intriguing cross with Morpheus and the Prisoner on the last page.

From: Alexis A. Gilliland June 23, 2006
4030 8th Street South, Arlington, VA

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Thank you for *Alexiad* #5.3, which arrived on the summer solstice shortly after the electrician replaced the dimmer switch for the dining room light. In other local news, when we moved here in 1974, a crew of three men moved Dolly's six foot baby grand piano into the basement where they reassembled it in the corner. Long time passing my nephew David, the musician, expressed an interest in her piano — eventually, that is, when he had some place to put it. Well, nobody was playing it, so I said sure, why not? First thing you know, David is getting married to a fellow musician, and then he and she are buying a condo in Minneapolis — a condo with room for the piano. So he called to make sure the deal was still on, and I said yes. After closing on the condo he called back to let me know that Modern Piano Moving would be coming by very shortly to pick it up. Then MPM called to say they would be by at 9 AM Thursday, and on the appointed day I was up and waiting. When they hadn't shown by 9:30 I called their cell number, and the truck had been diverted to Philadelphia, but they showed up about 12 hours later. Two of them. I won't say they were puny exactly, but it had been a long day and they looked at that big old piano, and decided they needed to come back with reinforcements. Realsoonnow theysaid, but hey, it's only been a week or so so far, and after mumble mumble years there's no hurry.

This year's Balticon went back to the Hunt Valley Inn, and was the best Balticon in several years, with a number of excellent parties on Saturday night. Alas, I came down with a cold on Monday morning, which became so bad that I called my doctor the following Wednesday for an appointment that Friday, when I learned I had bronchitis. He prescribed an antibiotic, five pills @\$17.50 each, which took care of the bronchitis as the cold went away in a timely fashion. I don't remember the last time I went to see the doctor because I was merely sick. (Breaking my ankle back in 1984 doesn't count.)

You ask: "Where are the new conrunners?" Mike Pederson & Co. put on Ravencon — a first time convention — down in Richmond back in April, and they did an excellent job. Truth in advertising: Lee and I were fan guests of honor (More truth: In the program book Mike wrote that he had invited Lee, who "modestly" assumed that she and I were to be co-guests of honor, so that he wound up stuck with me.) No matter, Ravencon was the most enjoyable convention I've been to in a long time and we're looking forward to going back.

I'm thinking that because around here, RiverCon has been replaced by ConGlomeration, which has become more and more gaming oriented, and in Nashville, Kubla Khan/Parthekhan and Xanadu have been replaced by Hypericon, which seems to be more media and games oriented. Your comments below about the decline of magazines also

apply, I think.

In "The Joy Of High Tech" Rodford Edmiston discusses sword making, and mentions Damascus blades. A recent article in *The American Scientist* describes how the making of damascene steel has been rediscovered. Historically, those swords were forged from iron billets imported from one mine in India, and when that mine was exhausted, similar iron billets from other mines didn't produce damascene steel, despite the best efforts of the Arab swordsmiths, and the art was eventually lost. It turns out that a few ppm of chromium contained in the iron from the original mine had a wetting effect in the iron carbide that the forging process produced in the steel being worked, so that the wavy lines of damascene (or patterned) steel appeared in situ, as if by magic. By contrast, the Japanese swordsmiths took layers of wrought iron and high carbon steel and welded them together, with the empirically correct number of foldings to ensure a sword with alternating micro layers of hard and tough steel. A well understood technique that was never lost, and is being practiced to this day, albeit for the collector rather than the working samurai.

Johnny Carruthers notes that *Amazing Stories* has expired for the umpteenth time and wonders if it could be revived once more, possibly by Dell Publishing. Maybe, but probably not. The sales figures published for SF magazines in *Locus* show a general downward trend, reflecting the fact that reading is no longer required to get one's fix of pulpish action adventure. Far from being able to rescue *Amazing*, Dell has to worry about the survival of *Asimov's* and *Analog* whose sales have precipitously declined over the last two or three decades. Why?

The old pharts are dying out and the youth are watching TV or movies, or DVDs of the same, and the market for text is accordingly diminished. Indeed, "Must Read SF" no longer exists except in the zombified form of college reading lists. "Wanna Read SF" — all those media related paperbacks — are there for an audience which lusts after more of the media product but is willing to accept the inferior print version of the product when their fix isn't available in media form. Originality has become a sales inhibiting quality, and after 80 years printed science fiction — which emphasized originality — is obsolete. *Amazing* just went extinct faster and more often than *Analog* or *Asimov's*.

Alas that *The Da Vinci Code* should turn out to be an ineptly researched thriller. Joe's observation that Dan Brown based *TDVC* on a book called *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* which in turn took at face value the "Priory of Sion," a fraud perpetrated by Pierre Plantard is pretty much on the money as far as he took it. For her sins, Lee had independently done some research on Plantard on one of her historical forums, and has very kindly outlined her findings in a separate attachment.

Given that *TDVC* is pretty much composed out of the whole cloth and void of any

connection with real history, how come the book was able to catch the wave of the zeitgeist and achieve Harry Potteresque success? My guess is that wave in question consisted of a substantial portion of Christianity being open to a reinterpretation of the role of Mary Magdalene. This is not a new thing; The Gospel of Mary Magdalene put her on a level with the Apostle Peter, but the editing and revisions of the New Testament greatly diminished her importance, in keeping with the misogyny of the early Church fathers. Might the contemporary congregation be receptive to a more important Magdalene? Such enhanced receptivity is unlikely to revise the Gospels, but might have some influence on the books that get published and the movies that get made.

Which is why the woman in the action movie is always the greatest fighter. Blushing gentle flowers who have spent their entire lives as postulants in convents turn out to be first-rate kickboxers, keen-eyed shots, and deadly swordfighters. It is fantasy, after all.

Richard Dengrove disagrees with my philosophical take on considering the Bible — what it said and how it came to say it — feeling that the Bible's proper use is to get a religious high. Well, as Karl Marx said: "Religion is the opium of the people." How does Dengrove feel about *The Da Vinci Code* which seems to have given a lot of people a related sort of religious high? *** Sigh. I'm glad that the banning of Ted White from Chez Gilliland gave Rodney Leighton his year's best laugh. *** Also recalling last fall's fan feud in WSFA, Martin Morse Wooster reports that the losing of it has made Keith Lynch "almost tolerable" in PRSFS. You're welcome, Martin, even if the welfare of PRSFS wasn't exactly what Lee and I had in mind at the time. It is true that WSFA and PRSFS have rather different club personalities, with very little overlap in membership, and this has always been the case. When Lee was divorcing her then-husband Jerry Uba, the divorce settlement specified that Lee would get WSFA while Jerry would get PRSFS. *** Milt Stevens is right about Rotsler, and I remembered Bill's second Hugo in '96 but not why he got it, probably because I thought retro Hugos were a dumb idea. Which takes nothing away from Bill, who was a class act. *** Generally I am in agreement with George Price about the female Gor fans, though in the day I merely found submissive women boring. The one overtly submissive lady I did have a chance to observe over time was passive-aggressive, with a serious mean streak. A Gorean slave girl wannabe? Well, no, the lady probably would have liked to be a Japanese mother in law. *** Alas that Trinlay Khadro's uncle failed to make a will, although I suppose the effort to do so must have seemed like admitting he was going to die. However, a 2/5 share is better than nothing.

I suspect that many of the kajira wannabes have that sort of desire where they want to be both dominated and in control.

— JTM

June 29, 2006

Modern Piano Movers came back, bright and early in the morning, but with only two guys. They came back with three after supper, and moved the piano out. The two guys were able to do most of it, but the third guy was necessary to move that big old piano up the five steps leading out of the basement.

And after 32 years, the piano is out of the house.

From: **E. B. Frohvet** June 21, 2006
4716 Dorsey Hall Drive #506, Ellicott
City MD 21042-5988 USA

The Veterans Administration helpfully allowed computer records containing basic identifying information (names, birthdates, Social Security numbers) of millions of veterans, to be stolen. This information is now being sold wholesale to identity thieves on the Internet. My bank says not to worry . . . Any relatives or friends who are vets (the only other vets I know in fandom are Milt Stevens and Janine Stinson) are encouraged to check with their banks.

On a related topic, the Decline of Littrusy Department calls attention to this carefully printed patriotic sign in a local store: "In observation of Memorial Day, we will be colsed on May 29." Shoot me now, just put the pistol to my head . . .

Lyn McConchie says she was surprised at the copy of *Heinlein's Children* I arranged for her to receive. She was expecting something smaller, more in the nature of a chapbook, but was delighted to discover such a hefty volume. I gave her your address in case she had any detailed comments. My formal "book review" was passed on to Janine for *Peregrine Nations*.

This is only the seventh time in twenty-six issues that *Alexiad* has arrived after the 15th of the month. Earliest arrival, the 8th (three times); latest, the 25th (once); typical, the 13th. Of course that hardly compares to fanzines showing up nine months after their nominal publication date, or going two years between issues. Having set such a high standard of punctuality, you are the victim of your own success: a week is seen as a real difference.

Regrettable as was the injury to the racehorse Barbaro, we should keep in mind that racehorses are basically rich people's toys, and exist primarily to separate the gullible from their money.

Let us not forget that they also provide sportswriters with good copy and also allow very minor fannish writers to inflict their obsession with these "rich people's toys" on unsuspecting readers.

— LTM

Your preceeding paragraph explains the one before it. We had to get the results of the Belmont before we could go to press.

I was sorry to hear of the death of Gräfin von Stauffenberg. Her husband was a true hero. (Contrary to the various disgusting forms of execution utilized by the Nazi regime, Stauffenberg died in honorable soldier fashion, before a firing squad.)

The True Stella Awards: There was a short-lived series on NBC a few years ago about an eccentric lawyer and his on-and-off girlfriend. In one episode, a man complained to the lawyer that he lost the club championship because someone yelled while he was putting. Could he sue? And the attorney replied, "This is America. Anyone can sue anyone for anything." Well, there you are.

Umm, I believe *Banana Wings* was not the FAAN Award winner. Read the editorial. A miscount, reminding one of the 1992 Fanzine Hugo debacle (handled with grace under pressure by George Laskowski).

But they were! From May 7 to May 10. Read the colophon.

— JTM

I agree mostly with your Hugo choices, just so we know those people won't get the awards; though I might have voted Claire Brialey second for the Langford Award, and Steve Stiles first for Fan Artist.

Richard Dengrove: A teacher at a Baptist college was fired, because he said that while the Bible contains everything needed to understand God and attain salvation, it doesn't contain everything needed to understand the entire rest of the world. The evidence indicates the climate of Labrador was warmer in Viking times; and even now wine grapes are grown successfully in upstate New York, and into Canada.

Trinlay Khadro: There's a word, "afterwit", meaning knowledge obtained too late to be any use. In view of this, I strongly second Trinlay's idea that everyone should make a will. Also, make sure your lawyer has filed the current one with the Register of Wills for your county. If it's not on file, they can't use it! I also suggest a detailed list of assets; bank accounts and insurance policies identified by number, family heirlooms, etc.

I never said the so-called "Confederates" were stupid. (Traitors yes, stupid . . . well, mostly no.) But I stand by my statement that the southern rebellion did not have the manufacturing capacity to produce millions of rounds of modern 7.62 ammunition, and I for one would hate to fight a war importing my ammunition from elsewhere via sailboat.

Robert Lichtman: Given the number of things on which you and I disagree, it's good to see you're still speaking to me.

Dainis Bisenieks: I keep a pen on my nightstand to make corrections in published books. Recently I found a rather obvious typo — in a book I had read at least three times. The most common errors involve misuse of

punctuation, especially quotation marks.

Rod Smith: I'm sure Rod knows that the derivation for the musical form is secondary, after its first notable stars: Bill Monroe & The Blue Grass Boys.

From: **Brad W. Foster** July 2, 2006
P.O. Box 165246, Irving, TX 75016-5246 USA
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Best Fan Artist Hugo Nominee

I'd heard of the Groucho Marx mystery books. Actually, I'd head of -a- book, I had no idea this had turned into a series. I've enjoyed stuff from Goulart in the past, and though your review isn't the most glowing, does sound like something fun and light to read as a palate cleanser between heavier tomes.

I keep running across references to Frank Reade Jr here and there as fun pulp stuff, even some that might have inspired Jules Verne. Some neat images on various websites of steam-drive robots and huge airships. Got to find some of this when I have the time . . . (yeah, right . . . "time".)

I read and enjoyed *Inkheart*, though it was not quite what I was expecting. Actually found it interesting that it didn't take the usual fantasy route of having the main characters travel to a distant land, but instead everything is set in this world. Quite nice.

Was a surprise to see my name in your "Handicapping the Hugos". It's been about a dozen years since I last won, so I doubt it will happen again, but nice to see someone thinks it could happen. As they say "it's an honor to be nominated", since at least it shows people are noticing my work each year. My money, and my vote, would be on Steve Stiles, who is not only long overdue for this, but, more fairly, has indeed had some fine work published this past year. These awards are not for "someone we like, or think did stuff in the past" but for work created in a specific year. And Steve did that for sure.

Speaking of awards, Janice asked about awards that carry a monetary award along with the recognition of winning. Well, there is indeed such a thing: the Rotsler Award. Created in 1997 by SCIFI (The Southern California Institute for Fan Interests) to honor the lifetime work of fanartists and the memory of uber fanartist William Rotsler. It's not only a lovely plaque, but comes with a \$300 check. Speaking of Stiles, he got the very first one! Here's the lineup so far:

1998: Steve Stiles
1999: Grant Canfield
2000: Arthur "Atom" Thomson
2001: Brad W. Foster
2002: Kurt Erichsen
2003: Ray Nelson
2004: Harry Bell
2005: Marc Schirmeister

A great line up of names, and I'm very proud to be associated with them all myself. (I wish we could track down Steve Fox, who contributed so many hugely detailed, wildly inventive pieces of artwork to zines in the 70s and 80s. Fantastic

work, given to zines big and small, and then he just seemed to vanish. Amazing talent.)

I wanted to find Grant Canfield, because he did a cartoon of *The Door Into Summer* that was just perfect — I had just done an article on the book. But no luck.

— JTM

Back to work on the website, which is almost . . . oh, just so close to being something worth looking at!

From: **Evelyn C. Leeper** July 2, 2006
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<http://www.geocities.com/evelynleeper>

Re Janice Stinson's comments that 1) the Hugo Award should carry a monetary award, and/or 2) the Worldcon supporting membership should be lowered to ten dollars: I hope she realizes that these are at best mutually exclusive, and actually both fairly impractical.

Assuming one means to award something other than the cost of a latte, let's start by assuming a \$1000 prize to each winner. Given that there are thirteen categories for the Hugo Award, that means a \$13,000 line item for the Worldcon (assuming no ties or "No Award"s). Since Worldcon membership is about 5500, that means an *average* increase of at least \$2 for each membership fee. (For a convention like Aussiecon 3, it would be more like an increase of \$10 per member.)

And as for decreasing the supporting membership fee to \$10, that amount would not even cover the cost of printing and mailing all the materials to the member.

Re Trinlay Khadro's advice about wills, signing all your artwork, etc.: I would add that you should also make provision for anything you may have written or created, especially if you are a co-author with other people or if you intend for it to go into the public domain. (A friend of ours had written or co-written some games, and after he died, no one had a clue as to who owned the rights, because no one knew whether he had any family.)

Re Trinlay Khadro's comment about the salute to Harryhausen in *King Kong*: The "dino battle" was a salute to Willis O'Brien, who did the special effects for the original *King Kong*. Ray Harryhausen learned from O'Brien; he worked under him on *Mighty Joe Young*.

Re Joe's response to Martin Wooster on TAFF: You [JTM] say, "air fare from London to the East Coast was down to £200. Is this fund really necessary?" It may be £200 in May, but what is it in August when the fan wants to fly to Worldcon? (Last year our airfare from New York to London was \$700 each — considerably more than £200.) Plus for a lot of fans £200 is a *lot* of money. Plus the airfare is not the only cost — there are also hotel rooms, foods, and so on.

TAFF is descended from the

Willis Fund. Back then, traveling to the States cost a lot more money than almost any fan had. But now, many fans have that kind of money. This is an idea that has done its duty and can retire with honors.

— JTM

Re Milt Stevens and *The Science Fiction Review*, I was a reviewer for *Delap's Science Fiction & Fantasy Review*, but I cannot remember the exact dates (though at least one review was from 1979, so that is one marker), and the issues are somewhere in the attic (I think). (It was before I was doing them on computer, that's for sure.)

From: **John Purcell** July 3, 2006
3744 Marielene Circle, Collee Station, TX. 77845-3926 USA
j_purcell154@yahoo.com

Once again, I thank you for sending *Alexiad* my way. The reviews, as always, were enlightening and helpful, to say nothing of downright interesting. I especially enjoyed the reviews of the Groucho Marx Mysteries. I have never heard of those books before, so the reviews were fun. In fact, if you wish to review another suitably obscure book for my zine, I can assure you it would find a home in my zine's "Obscurato" column.

Feel free to contribute at any time.

Speaking of series books, I have been reading some of the Brother Cadfael books of Ellis Peters. Fun stuff. They may be historical mysteries — set in 12th Century Shrewsbury — but that's alright. Very enjoyable reading. There are also videos available starring Derek Jacobi as the reputable monk, and they are likewise quite enjoyable. I am entertaining the thought of reviewing one of them in my zine, but they are not obscure enough (which is why the book review column is so named). If I follow through on this threat, I'll keep you in mind.

Lisa, the fate of Barbaro was followed closely in my household; we are all horse lovers — my wife is a certified Vet Tech, in fact — and we were thrilled to hear that Barbaro was going to be all right. The before and after x-rays of his ankle were remarkable. When you expressed the wish that all tracks would install Polytrack because it's safer for all horses, would you please elaborate on its components? I am unfamiliar with Polytrack, and my wife wasn't sure either. Thank you.

Polytrack is a recycled racing surface. It's been in use in Britain some twenty years. Turfway Park in Florence, Kentucky installed the surface last year. According to the msnbc news website Turfway had 24 fatal breakdowns on the previous dirt surface. This year they reported only three. 21 horses that probably would have died on the track came back safely. If true, it's an amazing difference. And if true, all tracks

should install it as soon as they can manage it. A previous artificial surface called Equitrack had problems because hooves damaged the surface and the horses, not emulating Bill, inhaled the surface. Polytrack, however, has had a twenty-year test run in Great Britain.

— LTM

A wikicon is an intriguing idea, one that may simply be a flash-in-the-pan deal. My gut feeling is that it might work for a small convention, something like under 100 attendees. Anything larger might get too unwieldy and chaotic, thus resulting in hotel damage and give fandom a black eye in the process. It might be worth experimenting with on a small scale; anything is worth a shot, says I, but those involved should be careful. The repercussions could be severe. But, like I said a moment ago, this might simply be a one-time deal or just an idea tossed out for discussion. It is interesting, I have to admit.

I was not aware that *Amazing Stories* had gone under yet again. This should not be surprising since I've been out of the sf magazine reading loop for close to twenty years. Being a bit of a nostalgic person at heart, I do hope that a publisher picks it up and handles it right. It would be so cool to have it around in 2026. (Egad! I'll be 72 years old by then! Oh, well.) Imagine the sales numbers for the 100th Anniversary Issue. Johnny Carruthers mentions Dell Publications as the best choice at the present time, and I agree; it seems to be running a slew of healthy genre magazines right now. Here's hoping somebody resurrects this granddaddy of all sf mag.

Gah. I'll be 72 that year too,
though towards its end.

— JTM

Wonderful book reviews herein, of course. The bibliophile in me thanks you from the bottom of my heart. As for the loccol, good stuff therein, but I have no real comments to make. Otherwise, a fine zine, and I thank you!

From: **Rodney Leighton** June 24, 2006
11 Branch Road, R. R. #3,
Tatmagouche, Nova Scotia B0K 1V0
CANADA

There's a way to distinguish between letters and locs.

Thanks for *Alexiad*, June edition. Arrived some time this week along with the latest VISA statement. What's up with that, hmnnn?

Read most of it.

Bill sent me a copy of that long letter and it prompted me to make up a list of my own with a few comments. It also got me started rereading the Wolfe books; I have read a number of them over the past little while and greatly enjoyed doing so.

I see you did some creative editing. Works for me.

Work, most of it, is currently a long damn ways away. 70 to 90 minutes one way,

depending on traffic and such. I have the offer of the use of a camp closer. I drink a lot of water and like it cool or better yet cold; camp has no water. I need to soak in a tub of hot water after work; camp does not have that. So far I am thinking that it is worth the gas to come home, have a bite, load up the pipe, read letters if any have arrived or zines or books while the water is heating up; have a good soak; have some supper and settle in the easy chair with the pipe and a good book. And freeze my drinking water for the next day. Means getting up at 3:00 a.m.; and writing times are restricted to days like today, when I have some things I need to do and don't go to work or it's raining hard or really wet or some combination thereof, like today.

I did one page of a zine thing. Abandoned it. If I don't want to write the thing, why would anyone want to read it.

One of the things I had to do . . . have to do it 5 or 6 times a year was pump air into my water tank, forcing the excess water out. Got that done.

Time to have a bite of breakfast.

Yesterday I went to Truro. had the oil change, etc. for the truck. Bought 3 *Spenser* novels. I find they are a much faster read than the Wolfe books; not sure why unless it is due to print size. I read one yesterday after I got home; lots of swearing in it, and sex, albeit not graphic.

Bought a bunch of groceries, some needed, some not, like the packages of Smarties I noted next to the checkout, 12 of those bitty snack size boxes in a plastic bag, 3 bags for \$5, so I now have 35 little boxes of Smarties.

On the way home I stopped at a convenience store to get some pipe tobacco. They had some grab bags for \$2 each. Waste of money but, what the hell, I like these things, it's fun seeing what is in them. Bought one. Let's see what is in it: 40 gram Oh Henry bar, normally sells for about 60¢, I think. Package of Mentos. No idea what these are. Breath mints?

Just had a call from the butcher who I get my pepperoni from; I had ordered some beef, I guess I will have a bunch of beef in the freezer this afternoon.

Woman who owned the secondhand book store died. Store is for sale. I kind of wish could afford to buy it.

Came to your admonition to faneds to send their fanzine to me and said, out loud: "Now why the hell did you do that?" Took a look at your fanzine list and decided I was in no danger. I think I already get all the paper fanzines on your list, at least in this issue, except *Banana Wings* and *Opuntia*. Been booted off the mailing list of both those.

Thing about fanzines I still like most of those I see. Sometimes, well . . . I read those 4 issues of *Banana Wings* as though they had been sent from the U.K. and I had promised to read them all quickly and respond quickly. Skipped, maybe, 3 articles in the 4 issues and thoroughly enjoyed reading them. Not long after issue #25 appeared. I read a fairly large section of it. About a quarter, or so, to go, I returned to reading books. A month or 5 weeks later, that issue is buried under the stand next to the easy chair under various publications, papers, crap.

Not forgotten. But not of sufficient interest to drag it out. I don't really want any more than I get, thanks anyway.

Robert Lichtman: well, I was hoping you would answer the question. But if you don't wish to, hey, it's no big deal. I shall refrain from directing any comments to or about you thenceforth. I was hoping for a response to my query re TAFF reports but if you have stopped reading my letters, I guess that won't be forthcoming.

Sheryl: don't know. MY memory is almost as bad as Tim thinks it is and I am unsure what your question refers to. I will try to answer it anyway. I got, from Lyn, a package of 3 books: an older anthology of short stories; a copy of the latest book of farm tales, currently with my sister at Acadia and *The Duke's Ballad*. If I mentioned the first 2 and a third book, yeah, that was it. I liked it. Later came a package with 2 books, a 10+ year old anthology of mostly mediocre shot stories; Lyn's was the second or third best out of 21, and a copy of *Beast Master's Circus*, which I abandoned after page 40 due to an excess of sf stuff.

Well, I'm damned if I know what these Mentos things are. My old eyes can't read any of the label except the part that says 'chewy orange flavored sweets'. Perfectly good description; 6 in the package, they are orange tasting, sort of like a mint, sort of like a bland gumdrop. I ate them, not bad but I won't bother trying to find more. Seems to have some foreign languages on the label, I'll try to remember to stick it in for you to play with if you so desire.

June 25. Yesterday just before I was going to get my beef there came a knock on the door and there stood a female person. Said she was from Stats Can. My house had been randomly selected as one to be surveyed re employment. Yippee. Let her in. I said: "Don't mind the mess and clutter." She said: "You're a bachelor?" "Yep." "I've seen worse." she said. And; "it doesn't look too bad to me." The third time she asked if I was single I wondered if she was hunting. 15 years ago I would have done my best to show her the bed or screwed her on the kitchen table where she had her computer typing in answers if that was what she wished. This time I didn't even flirt with this gal but that may not be true; at one point she was saying something about calling me and I was explaining that I always let the answering machine pick up all phone calls and she wondered how to reach me and I said, "well, wait until after the end of my message and say: 'this is the sexy Stats Can worker from Malagash'" and she kind of scoffed. Not a bad looking woman but, truthfully, not very sexy.

The grab bag also had a Cadbury Creme Egg. I'm gonna go eat it.

Well, I've been goofing off. Read all three of the *Spenser* books. One interesting aspect I have noticed is that these books provide some of the details that long time readers would already know but leave others for the reader to figure out. For instance, in the Wolfe books, each one introduces the brownstone, its layout, its occupants and schedule and other things; every book describes Saul Panzer and Inspector

Cramer, if he appears; everyone describes Wolfe's schedule with the orchids and other things. The Spenser books describe some things, like Susan's house and office but leave other things, such as who Susan might be, to the detection of the reader. Or sometimes not. Another aspect is that while they try to portray Spenser as a real hardass and a rather bad guy, some books have him doing humanitarian things.

Crimson Joy, 1988, has the cops asking Spenser for help in a murder; serial killer is a patient of Susan's; she comes to realize it but refuses to name him and is really pissed at Spenser and Hawk for demanding they protect her. But in the end, the killer, who is badly messed up psychologically, ends up crying in Spenser's arms.

In *Paper Doll*, 1993, Spenser gets involved in finding the killer of a woman who was not who she said she was and he tries to not only solve that but to help a badly dysfunctional man and his two children and also learns who killed the woman but lets him go.

Chance, 1996, has him and Hawk taking on the mob and is more violent than the other two but also has Spenser using a woman who has been abused a lot, in order to help her. One of the guys who was part of a later book I read is introduced here; a guy named Lee appears in some of the books; he is introduced in *Paper Doll*.

Another thing I have been thinking is the age thing. Archie never seems to age; through 30 years of Stout novels and into the Goldsborough novels he is still a ladykiller; more handsome and stronger than anyone on earth. I don't know how old Spenser should be but in *Chance* it is mentioned that he and Susan have been together for twenty years. So, having been other things prior to being a P.I. and having been one prior to meeting Susan, it figures that he must be, in *Chance*, at least 45 or 50. Susan must also be close to that. More recent books would make them older still. Almost my age. Yet, Spenser is still the toughest dude on earth, with the possible exception of Hawk; Hawk still gets women merely by smiling at them and Susan is still the hottest babe around. And they still act like they are 20 something. It's kind of cute. And kind of silly.

I once calculated, reading one of the Goldsborough Wolfe novels, that Archie would be 70 something and Lily close to that. But they still acted like 20 somethings. Part of me wanted to ignore it and just enjoy the story; part of me wanted to feel it was totally ridiculous.

Reading *The League of Frightened Men* I was startled to find Inspector Cramer smoking a pipe. So he went from a pipe smoker to a cigar smoker to a cigar chewer. Entirely possible; if only Archie had not proclaimed in later books that he had never seen Cramer light a cigar.

I also found: "God made you and me, in certain respects, quite unequal, and it would be futile to try any interference with His arrangements." Ha. One thing which just occurred to me is that I can't recall any attempt at establishing Wolfe and Archie's history. While smoking his pipe, Cramer says: "I've

known Nero Wolfe longer than you have, sonny". And Archie states that he has lived there for seven years. Which would suggest that Wolfe was a detective living in that house before the advent of the brash and apparently indispensable Archie Goodwin. How did that come about, I wonder?

In the first Wolfe novel, *Ferde-Lance* (1934), Archie mentions that Wolfe had had not only him but Saul Panzer and Fred Durkin on the payroll; then came the Depression and layoffs.

That grab bag also had a Hershey Marshmallow Egg. And a weird thing that sf folks should love. Plastic, looks something like a rocket ship. Called Twistup. Got some kind of cherry flavoured soft candy inside it; I'm not inclined to mess with it any longer at the moment.

You have, no doubt, noted that Lyn McConchie won the Sir Julius Vogel Award for best SF/F novel written by a New Zealand writer for *The Duke's Ballad*. Don't know how Andre Norton's name on the cover was handled.

Well, this is certainly lots of stuff. I am going down and cut a few scattered hardwood trees. That area is polluted with bears. One time I was down there I had cut a tree which landed partially on the road and I cut that up for firewood. Loading it on the truck I looked up and noted a bear ambling down the road. Watched him awhile; it's a long straight stretch there. The machine which hauls wood was parked on the side of the road, opposite a woods road, a road into the area to be cut. Bear came to there, glanced at the porter, decided it held no interest for him and turned into the woods road and ambled up that, I guess. Various people have mentioned seeing a sow with two cubs down there. Got to go down there shortly and walk quite a ways and then cut a few trees.

Okay, I guess this will do for now. Leah Zeldes Smith mentioned to me, ages ago, that it was possible to write a loc without mentioning anything in the fanzine or even the fanzine itself; I didn't think that was too sensible. BUT I seem to be gravitating that way.

From: **Dainis Bisenieks** June 26, 2006
921 S. St. Bernard Street, Philadelphia,
PA 19143-3310 USA

My prayers to the Godling of Small Favors (in 1950s money, \$1.98) have again yielded results. Books of interest at the Catholic parish rummage sale were few but good; I have mentioned Otto Skorzeny in these pages, and behold! there was the book about him, *Commando Extraordinary* by Charles Foley, in the 1967 Berkley edition. The irrelevant cover seems to show the German descent on Crete, and there are no illos, but I do at least have a pic of the man in Roger Manvell's *The Conspirators*, where he actually gets no more than a line. A fascinating account appears in the present book. Setting off from Berlin for

Vienna, he was hastily summoned as being a man who could help bring order out of chaos! A telling (and nicely told excerpt):

He decided to take the bull by the horns and go up to Armored G.H.Q.; but on turning in that direction he found the avenue leading to it was barred by tanks. Whose side were they on? Did they know themselves? Skorzeny drew himself up in the moving car to suggest that their side was his side and that his presence was expected. The tankmen saluted and let him pass; he was in..

Eventually he arrived at the War Office in time to witness the departure of General Fromm, Home Army Commander-in-Chief. Inside, he restored some order and learned more facts. But now, where was that etop man to make decisions when they were asked for? Major Skorzeny decided to assume the responsibility: "when, some hours later, he got through to the Wolf's Lair he was simply told to carry on" which he did until on July 22 Himmler walked in and relieved him.

What his subsequent reflections were, I will leave as an exercise for the reader.

Checking the works of Sir John Wheeler-Bennett (*The Nemesis of Power*) and Peter Hoffman (*The History of the German Resistance 1933-1945*), the reader learns that Skorzeny was a minor figure, working under the direction and supervision of RSHA chief SS-Obergruppenführer Ernst Kaltenbrunner (*Wheeler-Bennett, Pages 662 & 675; Hoffman, Pages 510-511*).

I first heard of Skorzeny for certain in April 1945, when a children's book about German war heroes was briefly in my hands. Each story was a sequence of pictures with the narrative in rhymed quatrains; and there I learned how he sprang Mussolini from captivity on the Gran Sasso. The woman who lent it to me remarked how the war had by then been lost; nobody was alert for that kind of talk among civilians anymore.

Memories of that time: the formations of bombers, locally unopposed, flying across the Alps; the trail of discarded objects left by an Army unit retreating farther into the Alps, with here and there a roadside grave. In all that time, I saw no blood and no corpses, though dreadful things were just around the corner. Much was just plain unpleasant. When I first heard the word "Ausländer", I knew instantly what it meant.

Those were Interesting Times.

Oh yes — the book is little burdened with untranslated German. No O.K.W, no R.H.S.A., no SS ranks. Ah, but we know . . .

Oberkommando der Wehrmacht
"Supreme Command of the
Armed Forces"
Reichssicherheitshauptamt
"Reich Security Main Office"

Two more instances of bad moons were revealed to me in the course of proofreading, both crescents setting much, much too late. One was in "Piracy Preferred", first of the "Arcot, Wade, and Morey" stories collected under the title of the third, *The Black Star Passes*. The other, a recent fantasy story in a Year's Best antho; naming no names, I will only say it came from *F&SF*, whose editor was blissfully unaware.

The antho text was clean, with no characteristic OCR errors, but in three or four places some small and necessary word was missing from a sentence; which I then supplied. Let me give a sentence from an older published work in which I supply such a word:

Smaug certainly looked fast asleep, almost dead and dark, with scarcely a snore nor more than a whiff of unseen steam, when Bilbo peeped once more from the entrance . . .

A nicely structured, balanced sentence, what? If I were translating, this is what I would translate, just as in *Titus Groan* I would translate adjure, stalagmites, lupine, and marten instead of the words that occurred in the printed text (the first, at least, has been fixed). It is easy to see that between holograph and typescript one of three similar words was lost, and nobody ever noticed.

I see also that Lindsey Davis has changed publishers; the "Falco" series now comes from St. Martin's/Minotaur. (Norman Johnson?) With a dust wrapper designed by a committee, *See Delphi and Die* suffers from an image problem. And U.S. publication is still a year behind British.

Jasper Fforde never had any such problem; I await *The Fourth Bear*. Cognoscenti will have noticed that the "Nursery Crime" books derive from the extreme makeover of Caversham Heights (see the conclusion of *The Well of Lost Plots*). Eradications Anonymous, the mutual support group for those whose nearest and dearest have been expunged from history; its object is to help the afflicted to get their delusional memories out of their system. And when a rejoicing member shows up with her restored husband — "'Does anyone recognize this person?'" She then realizes: "'Now he's back, everything is as it was, and I wouldn't have needed to come to your group, so I didn't — yet I remember . . .'"

Can there have been an issue of *Alexiad* in which H. Beam Piper has not been mentioned? Can his work be as canonical as all that? I have told of a re-reading of "Temple Trouble", umpty-ump years ago, when I realized that the Paratimers were the *bad* guys, monopolizing the sale of mirrors and beads to the natives of the Multiverse.

Janine Stinson finds a statement of mine unclear. Okay: A Cherryh novel set in 2324 is written as though by a writer in 2324, avoiding exposition of what a reader in 2324 could be expected to know.

Damon Knight praised Murder in

Millennium VI (1951) by Curme Gray, an obscure (and only) novel by an obscure writer, because it had precisely that structure (In *Search of Wonder*, Pages 201-206).

Gosh, an allusion to "Piracy Preferred"! What most strikes me about the young Campbell's space opera is (1) the perfervid language in which very large engineering works are described, and (2) the prenaturally short time that passes between the first back-of-envelope design and the completed product. Goshwow!

Further to Janine: if Seton's *Katherine* is a favorite, did you spot the astrologer calculating the influence of Neptune?

Whoever might, in some finer world than this, edit a revived *Amazing* would do well to have an assistant editor or two with knowledge vegetable, animal, and mineral; who knows, for example, the difference between ordnance and ordinance. And all that sort of thing. Perfection is only approached asymptotically . . . but I think I did rather well in exactly that work at exactly that magazine.

A TV meteorologist was telling about the beginning of summer — in very, very misleading language. In the purely astronomical sense, it's all downhill from June 21 on.

I had the identical thought about Barbaro: not likely to improve the breed.

In the May 22 *New Yorker* I read about Patrick Leigh Fermor, a real-life character out of E. R. Eddison. I had, in fact, heard of the wartime exploit in which he had a part, the kidnaping of a German General on Crete. It was reported, I cannot recall where, to have entered the local tradition of epic chant, with inevitable changes from soberly-recorded history. Y'know — Milman Parry; Albert B. Lord's *The Singer of Tales*, the oral-formulaic method of the Homeric and the Serbian bard. The sober history in this case is *Ill Met By Moonlight* by W. Stanley Moss, not likely to easily fall into my hands. Fermor's own writings are books of travel; but a biography is in preparation.

Ill Met By Moonlight is better known for the movie:

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0049357/>

You will be pleased (or perhaps resigned) to know that it has an error about the phase of the moon. It is available on VHS and DVD.

Sir Patrick Michael Leigh Fermor, D.S.O., is ninety-one, and was knighted in 2004.

It did not surprise me to learn that among his friends was Sir Ian Moncreiffe of that ilk, who also did something in the war.

The Brits also had Vladimir Peniakoff; I read the book *Popski's Private Army*, many years ago, and was more recently pleased to see a tribute to him in Osbert Lancaster's *Sailing to Byzantium*.

Can I then in the same breath speak of Otto Skorzeny, who was after all on the other side?

Somewhat depressingly, there are only fifteen or so veterans of P.P.A. still living. I have at some expense bought the British edition of Peniakoff's book, titled merely *Private Army*, because the Penguin paperback edition had been cut. One of his officers was named John Campbell. Really. (John Davis Campbell, M.C., Captain, Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders — and he's still alive, the last surviving officer of P.P.A.)

Now if only Popski would be as popular among alternate history writers as Skorzeny is . . .

<http://users.pandora.be/ppa/>

— JTM

In the matter of railway journeys by Talbot Mundy characters, I have learned that a line from Lod (Lydda) to Haifa was not built until after the British conquest of Palestine; but my sources give no date. From Haifa it was certainly possible to reach Damascus via Dera'a, a journey (it says here) of ten hours. I have this from a *Jerusalem Post* article, which tells also that a renewed line, making a more southerly crossing of the Jordan Valley, where Jordan will then build its part, is in an advanced stage of planning.

There came for proofing a no-holds-barred farce of alien invasion and human riots which required wholesale revision of punctuation. Authorial solecisms abounded to the degree that I seriously wondered how many of them were part of the *intended* effect. But surely not, for example, repeated "then" for "than"? Beyond such things, to revise was not my brief. One syntactic deviation was used so often that I just had to leave it in place. Considering a part of the intended stylistic effect. I wondered what reviews the original edition got — but I am suppressing the names to protect the guilty.

From: Jeffrey Allan Boman July 3, 2006
6900 Cote St-Luc Rd. #708, Montreal,
QC H4V 2Y9 CANADA
croft@bigfoot.com

This is Jeff from Jolicoeur (not really . . . I just wanted that alliteration thing).

I hoped to have this letter in last issue of the zine, but computer issues and Canada Post made that impossible: the Post lost my zine in transit, so I had to print out a new one. I still hoped to be ready, but the loss cost me about a month of reading and writing time.

My computer is more thorny: Within about a month of my last letters Windows and my Hard Drives ceased to be easily accessible. Until I can get back to the shop to get this latest mess fixed I've had to use Linux live CDs to even get online. The good news is that I like Linux, and will make my PC dual-boot with it when I can. The bad news however is that if I don't save my files in my Gmail account as a backup, I lose them on a reboot. When running off CD there's no other way to save stuff.

I'm hoping to get it fixed soon, but for now

this just proves an addage I just made up: where there's a Taurus there's a way.

Onto *Alexiad* Vol. 5, No. 2:

Congratulations Joe on getting *Heinlein's Children* out! I'm sure my friend Spider Robinson will be glad to hype this book, considering both that he's a huge RAH fan and has the title as his successor. / I also can't see today's kids digging Howdy Doody. Lack of computer-generated effects alone would turn them right off. / I fail to see a point to the IPY. Mind you I already think of Daylight Saving Time as a dumb thing.

Really bad news about "Robert Jordan". I'm not a fan of his writing, but he's still a fellow human being. His writing style is irrelevant to his health. / As a member of the IMPs (Impatient to be Published) on Compuserve's SF Literature forums, Mike Resnick is also Bwana. / I'm not a big fan of Ray Bradbury's work, and he's come across as a crusty curmudgeon in interviews of late, so *Bradbury Speaks* doesn't interest me in the least. / *The Spies Who Never Were* sounds like a book that would interest me. It goes without saying that I wish these double agents had been able to take Hitler out, but that ultimately wasn't their results . . .

Well in a sense they did:
Consider how much GARBO
contributed to the success of the
Normandy landings.

With my current PC woes, Marconi is more difficult to read . . . / I was a member of The Bi-Metallic Question, a Holmes club here in Montreal, so reports about fan trips involving him interest me. / Welcome to the world of digital photography. / Re: *Misquoting Jesus* . . . don't get me started on how the scriptures have been changed by man . . . I'll never leave.

Letters

John Hertz: Thanks to The Simpsons I can't think of the word Duff without also thinking of beer. :)

Sheryl Birkhead: I'm a chocoholic also – but one who had to stop it cold turkey nearly 4 years ago for dietary reasons. You never forget it though.

Alexis A. Gilliland: I don't remember if Torcon III in 2003 had a fan GoH . . . mind you I was just happy to be there, what with it being my first WorldCon, so who the guests were was irrelevant to me! There were folks I'll always be glad I saw again (it was the last time I saw the late Harry Stubbs) and some I'm glad I had a chance to meet (Robert Silverberg [even if he was unlikable] and the late Jack L. Chalker [my guilty pleasure]) though.

Robert S. Kennedy: Let me add my belated sympathies on your loss. / I'm gunning for Montreal to win the 2009 WorldCon bid for selfish reasons (my hometown), so I can't knock you for hard-selling Denver in 2008. / I've yet to see *The Thirteenth Floor*, but it's tempting me to rent it now. Yours makes the third praise of it. / *Crash* was an okay film, but as you say, not perfect. I hadn't even thought of the gaffe in the gun purchase scene.

Me: Ah, my PC headaches had already begun here. Serves me right for actually trying to upgrade a system that was working until then. / To answer you Joe: when I have the bucks free, I'll order your book.

Brad W. Foster: Good to hear that your cat's cancer is cleared up. One of my mom's cats may have this blight. If so I hope she can pull through it.

Milt Stevens: Just the fact that there are still living veterans of WW I is amazing in itself!

Sixty-nine world-wide, twenty in the U.S. (including one Canadian) and three in Canada. Subject to change without prior notice.

Lloyd Penney: You mention our coffee shops to Trinlay . . . I'm part of the NaNoWriMo (National Novel Writing Month) group here in Montreal. We've always met at a Second Cup, and our first two years we were next door to a Starbucks. We made a point of supporting the Canadian business.

George W. Price: Concerning your story to Brad about the cat mothers: I thought we were supposed to stay away from kittens that young or the mothers would kill them – or is this just an old wife's tale?

David Herrington: I have you trumped as far as long overdue reading goes: I still have books to read that I bought in 2003! Outside of books on writing, deadlines have kept me from reading novels for fun for eons.

Trinlay Khadro: My condolences on your uncle dying. / In my family, men top out in their late 70s. / I've heard so many bad reviews of *Alexander*. If you do succeed in watching it, I suspect you'll deserve a medal. / concerning your *Worth More Dead* comments: I was feeling suicidal myself about 12 years ago, then realized the person who led to that feeling wasn't worth it. Haven't felt that way since. Besides, my cat would go hungry if I wasn't here to feed her.

Taras Wolensky: I've seen the script for the follow-up film to *Buckaroo Banzai*. It makes me even sorer it never got filmed.

According to IMDB it was: as
Big Trouble In Little China.
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0090728/>
The Adventures of Buckaroo
Banzai Across the 8th Dimension
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0086856/>

Sue Burke: I also only saw *Serenity* when it came out on DVD. In fact, I own it now. / I'm surprised film piracy is so rampant in Spain. I thought it was more prevalent in Asia.

Martin Helgessen: You must get a chuckle out of Firefox code-naming the next version of their browser "Bon Echo", so close to Bon Ami.

July 8th, 2006

This is Jeff from Joliette . . .
(I can't keep having double letters in one issue. I'll run out of 'j' names more rapidly.)
I managed to read issue 5.3 faster than I expected, so I could start on this LoC sooner.

Before I start: I created a wetpaint community for APAs, zines and similar things on the Internets. The URL is:

<http://fanselfpub.wetpaint.com/page/Home>

So far I'm the only contributor but I hope that'll change. Like a Wiki anyone can create an account and update it. This opens it up to spammers, but I'll slowly and surely get rid of them.

So far I've only listed the APAs and zines I'm a member of, so *Comicopia*, *The Knarley Knews* and *Alexiad* get mentioned. All I have is Joe's e-mail address here, but I Spam-blocked it. Making Joe the recipient of a ton of unwanted junk would be rude on my part.

Re: Reviewer's Notes . . . the wikicon idea sounds doomed to failure. I stepped down from conrunning to avoid group politics stress, but I hope more people come in. / I've managed to avoid MySpace, but I have many blogs, a Livejournal, and member accounts on Friendster and tribe so I'm not that far away.

Re: Random Jottings . . . I had the chance to meet Forry at Con*Cept 1999, and have a photo with him. I didn't realize he had literary chops outside of *Famous Monsters of Filmland* though. / H. Beam Piper is one of my favorite authors. His notes to tie all of his writings together was an inspiration to me; although my own notes don't even hold a candle to his, I try. I've always wished he had lived to write more, so we could read how everything held together . . . having some of his work now available through Project Gutenberg is both bad and good: bad that his estate couldn't keep his work out of the public domain. Good since more people can now be exposed to his work.

It's coming up on forty-two years since Piper killed himself, so some copyright expirations seem inevitable. The duration of copyright is a delicate balance between authors being able to make a living and readers needing to read it. For example, the works of Henry Kuttner and C. L. Moore were kept out of print because Moore's second husband despised SF; but now that he's gone, his daughter has sold rights and we can see the Baldies, Gallagher, Northwest Smith, Jirel of Joiry, and the rest of the gang again.

Re: *Dying of the Light* review . . . I've been a fan of George R.R. Martin's work ever since the *Wildcards* novels. I've grown to love his *Songs of Ice and Fire* series and his skill at making such a large cast interesting. That said, this book doesn't sound interesting to me. / Re: Vault of the Ages . . . with so many millennium before the time capsule is meant to be opened there's one important thing the originators should have thought of: if people of that time don't have a way to read what they're given, it will have been pointless!

Re: Tékumel reviews . . . I've only read *The*

Man of Gold and *Flamesong* as I've never found the other books. Personally I like the very different flavor of this universe. To me what's made most fantasy mediocre has been a dependence on Medieval Europe as inspiration for the world. I never knew that Professor Barker was a follower of Islam though. I remember him having strong female protagonists. I wonder how this sat with his religious views. / Re: Ron Goulart's Groucho novels . . . Groucho as a detective? That reads as a strange mixture . . . I have to track these down!

I got the other three *Tékumel* books from Amazon. The publisher has a website:
<http://www.zotpubs.com>

Re: *Spin* review . . . the sloppy editing to make times inconsistent would make this a "Toss against the wall and give up" book to me. / Re: *The Empress of India* review . . . a book that expands characters from the Holmes canon. That's a good thing to me. / Re: *One Nation Under Therapy* review . . . I feel like an old fogey saying this, but my generation wasn't this messed up. / Re: *The True Stella Awards* review . . . this seems a companion to the Darwin Awards, as further evidence of how messed up modern society is.

Re: *Inkheart* . . . I recently got *Princess Bride* on DVD. Any book in a similar vein is something I'll have to track down. / Re: *Amazing Stories* . . . I got a form letter from the magazine in 1999 (I think at the time TSR had it) to the effect that they already had too many stories in submission backlog and wouldn't review any newer ones. That the magazine is again in bad shape (and with a different publisher too) is a real shame. I hope it gets back on its feet and remains so this time. / I'd also think of Dell Magazines as a good home. It could provide a different flavor of SF from both *Analog* and *Asimov's*.

Re: *The Human Brain* . . . review . . . I've read up a lot of materials on the brain and nervous system. I wonder if this one would interest me as well or seem too dry.

Letters

Richard Dengrove: As it was relayed to me, the situation between Jews and Arabs in the Middle East is even more complicated. I was told that when Israel was created, the Jews offered Palestinians every opportunity to be equal partners. At the time, the other leaders refused, taking their people to tent encampments instead, then tried to teach their people that the Jews forced them out. Add to this the fact that Yassir Arafat walked away from an Israeli offer for a Palestinian homeland as they have now . . . I think no one is in the right there.

Janice G. Stinson: Re your comments to Carol Clarke on favorite movies lists . . . mine grows many times also. When it comes to old school favorites though, my list hasn't changed: *It's a Wonderful Life*, *Citizen Kane* and *Some Like it Hot*. / I can't help but anthropomorphize my cats at times. Mind you, I see them the most and after 13/17 years, so I can't really avoid it.

Alexis A. Gilliland: Using another bit from *Life of Brian*, I read anything about Gospels and I just start singing "Always look on the bright side of life!"

Trinlay Khadro: Genndy Tartakovsky is to me one of the most prolific and inventive North American animators. Had I the funds, I'd buy every series he has out on DVD.

E. B. Frohvet: I didn't mean no author could involve Hitler yet write well. I just meant my own bias against seeing it that way. It only worked for *The Producers* because it's done in ridicule. / You had good experiences meeting Harlan years ago, but I've also heard many bad experiences.

Martin Morse Wooster: I don't think Montreal's MONSFFA ever had ties to other fannish groups like that. As far as I know its only claim was in having a legend of *Asimov's* magazine editing and friend of Isaac's (Alistair Searle?) a member in his last few years.

Jason K. Burnett: Switching from library studies to the medicine field? To me, that seems a dramatic switch!

Robert Lichtman: Pacing myself on efanazines has proven not to be difficult, as zero hasn't been a challenge to maintain. / Roger Ebert was a zine guy also? If he didn't seem so mediocre to me as a film critic (I never base my film choices on them) I'd think of him as cool.

Brad W. Foster: Congratulations on your Hugo nomination! I hope it'll go your way. / I believe I often hear the head of Yard Dog Press on some of the "Winging it" podcasts.

Dainis Bisenieks: I wouldn't be surprised if that "Halfelven" typo on Tolkien's works led to that being a race in the Dungeons and Dragons game. At least it may have influenced it.

Sheryl Birkhead: I rented *Brokeback Mountain* a few months ago. While it shocked me to see Michelle Williams and Anne Hathaway shed their wholesome images (Michelle was supposed to be a vamp on Dawson's Creek, but we never saw it fully), it was mostly just an okay film, not to me award-worthy.

Lloyd Penney: For now at least you may only see me here and in TKK, unless I learn how to read and write faster, so my other project deadlines aren't too affected. / I'm sure the Montreal bid was initially quiet for the reasons you mention. I worked with Rene on Con*Cept; I know he's fantastic at what he does. / Re: Joe's comment . . . send me more zines? Ghod no! I need to sleep sometime!

Sleep? That's a disease caused by caffeine deficiency.

(Granted I'm prolific but I'm not also masochistic!)

Milt Stevens: With me a fan of Hong Kong action films, your great grandmother's cane sounded very cool!

Rod E. Smith: A DV film camera like what you mention is likely my next item . . . and I'm not even close to being an engineer.

Henry L. Welch: I'll be 40 next May, and so far I still have the most hair of all the men in my family. Hopefully that won't soon change.

Colleen R. Cahill: Good to hear a cutback on medicine got you to LoC.

John Purcell: My reading habits haven't been as good as I'd like for nearly 5 years now. I've gone to several conventions, bought a lot of books with the authors present to sign them, but I haven't gotten around to reading many of them. I guess writing means less reading.

Robert S. Kennedy: I've been very hesitant about seeing *United 93* myself. Just the images of the crumbling towers on all channels at the time of 9-11 scarred me for a long time; this film could put me back into those dark days. / I have neither watched *Veronica Mars* or *Bones*. Not enough hours in the day. / I wish I could claim weight back that I lost at conventions! At less than 120 pounds, I need all I can get!

Sue Burke: Even if I was in a safe place I wouldn't visit Chernobyl! Good thing travel to other continents isn't in my current budget.

Taras Wolansky: I briefly met Wen Spencer at Torcon 3 in 2003, and have read samples of her work, even link to her blog from mine . . . yet I didn't know anything of her brother. Shows how little I read her online . . . yet more of the "writing more than reading" excuse I guess . . .

Re: A Lost Episode of *The Prisoner* . . . I can picture the crankiness of the actor meeting Morpheus. Patrick McGoohan comes off as very crabby.

The scene where P and Neo faced off in a bout of Kosho was something else, let me tell you!

— JTM

From: **Lloyd Penney** July 12, 2006
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Many thanks for sending off the newest *Alexiad*, no. 27. This may be a quick letter, who knows?

A wikicon? I've heard of on-line conventions before, and in spite of the best efforts, I don't think they've happened as envisioned. Nothing beats getting together and socializing. In many ways, there may be some level of trust online, but I am seeing that manners aren't getting any better. We're so brave that I can say what I like and flame you because I have the safety of distance and pseudo-anonymity. There's still too much heat, and not enough light.

The announcement of a large Star Trek programming track at LAcon IV has some of the local Trekkers in a tizzy. This past weekend's convention was our local Trek con, and most of these folks would never think to go to Worldcon. Now, they wish they could, and it's too late.

I was looking forward to meeting Frankie Thomas at LAcon IV, mostly because I did see some of the episodes of "Tom Corbett" on local television some years ago. This is becoming a trend, to have some of the Worldcon's GoHs pass away before the convention can actually happen. We need to honour these people quicker, or get younger guests.

At least it wasn't like John Brunner, who died at the con. And then there was Patrick Troughton, who did not become Jon Pertwee.

The review of Robert Charles Wilson's *Spin* reminds me that I should pass on to you the winners of this year's Aurora Awards. *Spin* was nominated for Best Long-Form Work in English, but lost to *Cagebird* by Karin Lowachee.

I would also like to see *Amazing Stories* rise from its perpetual ashes, and become a regular magazine again, paper or otherwise. I would very much like to find out how profitable pulps like *Asimov's*, *Analog* and *F&SF* are in this electronic age. Do you think Dell might be interested, or would that just be a further drain on a limited profit margin? Maybe we're just poking the dead carcass, hoping it will move a little further with enough impetus.

The only reason I ask if there truly is that much coffee in the world is that there now seems to be dozens of coffee shops, all within easy reach, and all quite busy. But then, this kind of phenomena goes back some years ago, pre-Starbucks, when there was a Chock Full o' Nuts on nearly every street corner in Manhattan in the late 70s.

It is easy to think that awards like the FAAns are controlled by a small group. I used to think the same thing about the Auroras. However, it wasn't that a small group was controlling, but that the group was the only group participating. This year's Aurora winners are much more representative of Canadian fandom and prodom because there was record participation from across the country. I think the same illusion dogs the FAAns, and there has to be more participation from fanzine fandom around the world.

Fan fund reports hey, Yvonne and I wrote up our CUFF adventures in a traditional printed trip report. If we can do it, surely TAFF and DUFF winners can do it. Or, are we now so seduced by the Web that we don't care to print up a report, even if electronic?

PR5 for LAcon IV should be available shortly, if they have not arrived at your home address by now. That's my next big job, get 200+ PR5s in the mail to all Canadian members.

I've paying what attention I can to the current shuttle mission. NASA demanded that it launch, dismissing the concerns expressed by its own technicians. NASA is lucky that the mission has been flawless, but they can't be this lucky every time. I wish they'd listen more to their techs, they were doing what they get paid for. Nonsense like making sure the shuttle launches on July 4 will get valuable people killed.

Hello, Henry I got the feeling you weren't happy about Ditto from reading your writing here and in your own zine. Sorry I misinterpreted your remarks. Yet, you were disappointed with the number of people who attended, and that's where I probably got that impression.

Greetings again to Robert S. Kennedy. Yvonne will be trying to bring the 2009 ISDC to

Toronto. Because the Japanese Worldcon is simply unaffordable for us, our plans are to go to the 2007 ISDC in Dallas in May. Perhaps see you there.

Not NASFiC in St. Louis?
We're planning to be there.

— JTM

And, I am done here. Lunch is a little late, but go and have it I shall. If you are planning to be at the Worldcon, we'll see you there. And, if not, we'll see you next issue. Looking forward to it.

From: **George W. Price** July 14, 2006
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Joe's review of Naomi Novik's "Temeraire" books about dragons in Napoleonic times notes that some dragons are ridden by women and comments, "Keep it on the quietus, or next thing you know they'll want to own property or even vote!" I realize this is tongue-in-cheek, but it reflects a common misunderstanding. You shouldn't believe for an instant that women were denied the right to own property in early 19th Century England. Or before. Or since. In the romantic fiction of that time, a frequent theme is the well-born but penniless fellow who seeks to repair his fortunes by marrying a rich widow. But how could there ever be a rich widow if women couldn't own property? Upon the husband's death, wouldn't his property have to go to the nearest male heir? I suspect that this notion of women without property rights really stems from the fact that in many jurisdictions a married woman could not own property independently of her husband. When she married, her property became his. But likewise, when he died, his property became hers. So, women could and did own property, and there were plenty of rich widows — though never enough to satisfy the demand.

My favorite light opera, Lehar's *The Merry Widow*, turns on this point. Count Danilo balks at marrying Hanna, the rich widow of a banker, because he doesn't want to be thought a fortune hunter. So she tells him that she will lose her money if she remarries. The obstacle removed, he proposes and she accepts. And then she tells him that the reason she will lose her money is that it will go to her husband.

Joe reviews *The True Stella Awards: Honoring Real Cases of Greedy Opportunists, Frivolous Lawsuits, and the Law Run Amok*, by Randy Cassingham, and quotes from it, "When a truly frivolous suit is filed, there must be real and meaningful sanctions against the plaintiffs involved — and, often, their lawyers." My suggestion is that a judge, confronted with such a case, should respond by laughing until he falls off his chair. Then he should dismiss the case — with prejudice — and fine the lawyer a suitably heavy sum for bringing frivolous litigation. And finally, he should remit half the fine, for giving the court such a good laugh.

But why do so many judges tolerate such nonsense in the first place? Well, some judges don't really care about the Rule of Law; instead they look for any excuse to make the case come out the way their ideology or sympathies dictate. Apart from that, the most believable reason I've heard is that many a judge will get tired of the boring job of construing the law as it stands, and will try to make a name for himself by "breaking new ground" — that is, by torturing the law to make it mean something that had never occurred to the legislators who wrote the law. In either case, the problem is not primarily the lawyers, who are only trying to help their clients win; it is the judges who tolerate frivolous suits and absurd interpretations of the law. The lawyers are only doing what the judges let them get away with.

Lisa mentions ("Rural King") seeing "Toobs, which are plastic transparent tubes of different varieties of figures. There are Pirate Toobs but unfortunately I didn't see any that could have been Anne Bonney or Mary Read." Ah, you mean, no Toobs with boobs?

Rodford Edmiston's "The Joy of High Tech" discusses the history of iron and steel making. He notes that "For over a thousand years, the most successful [artisans] were . . . those who could consistently reproduce their results." Their hard-won rules of thumb were eventually displaced "as science explained just what was happening and provided tools to make it happen more easily."

This reminds me of an event fifty-odd years ago, when I was a spectrographer in a commercial laboratory that analyzed samples for die casters, smelters, and other metal producers. Most of the samples were of known alloys, and our job was to make sure that the samples met the specifications for those alloys. But once, a regular customer sent us a sample that was a real oddball. It not only didn't meet the specs for what the customer told us it was, it did not come close to any standard alloy. But I did the analysis and sent them the results. Then about two weeks later another commercial laboratory sent us a sample that they couldn't handle, because they did not have the necessary equipment, and we did. And damned if it wasn't that same weird alloy. So I did that one, too, and sent the result to the other lab to pass on to their customer. What the hell was going on? No way to be sure, but I suspect most strongly that our customer sent the weird sample to us and the other lab as a way to check up on both of us. Had either lab reported it as "in spec" for what they had told us it was, they would have known we were faking it (a constant problem with the shoddy commercial laboratories). Or maybe they were just double-checking by sending it to two labs. I don't know if they ever discovered that in fact one lab did both analyses.

Rodney Leighton wonders if "ADVENT would be interested in novels set on the high seas and in Europe long ago, with a captain of one of the last sailing ships who happens to be a necromancer . . . ?" The author lives in the

U.K. and has not been able to find a publisher. The answer is no. Advent specializes in nonfiction about science fiction and fantasy. We fill a niche that the pro publishers don't want to bother with, because sales would be too small. We aren't interested in competing in the fiction market, because if a fiction book is good enough for us, it is also good enough for the regular pro publishers. The lady should keep trying, and maybe get a different agent.

To be sure, we did publish a fiction book not too long ago: Doc Smith's *Have Trenchcoat — Will Travel* (2001, hard cover, \$20). This is a private-eye novel and three short stories, all previously unpublished and comprising all of Doc's fiction that is neither sf nor fantasy. Advent published it for its associational interest with the field while the stories are quite readable, they are not world-beaters, and we would not have been interested had they been written by anybody but Doc Smith (or some other sf icon).

Letters from Rodney Leighton and Robert S. Kennedy mention the failed lawsuit by Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh against Dan Brown, claiming that *The Da Vinci Code* was based on their idea. Like Kennedy, I wonder why they thought they had a case. There was a fundamental contradiction here. Had their book been presented as fiction, they just possibly might have had a case that Brown stole their plot. (Though usually one cannot copyright a plot or idea; what is copyrighted is the particular arrangement of words in which the plot is worked out.) But these blockheads presented their work as history. If it really happened, then anybody can write about it. It's as if the first person to write a novel about Osama Bin Laden and 9/11 were to then claim that nobody else could write novels about that subject. Perfectly absurd!

Dan Brown did in *The Da Vinci Code* what a lot of "counterfeit spy" writers do; he said "this is a novel but all the background is true". If anyone complained, "Well, it's just a novel." As Stanley Baldwin said, "Power without responsibility" and I'd guess they sold themselves, too.

— JTM

From: **Trinlay Khadro** July 14, 2006
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<http://stores.ebay.com/sillykitty>

Sorry my LOC has been somewhat delayed. I'm somewhat behind on all my correspondence. I try to LOC zines as soon as I get them, but sometimes that isn't happening. If anyone has sent me a zine and I haven't LOCced, I'm still interested in your zine, my life has just been somewhat insane.

Uncle passed away February 28th, and the first weekend in May we had the estate sale. The whole time in between I was over doing it

almost every day, trying to clear out his house for the estate sale. My mom is the actual executor, but like most of the family responsibilities for Uncle, she had official responsibility, but I was stuck with the heavy lifting. (My parents live in Indiana, and I live about 5 minutes from Uncle's house.) The house has been sold, to a young couple, and I'm hoping they have as many happy memories there as KT and I have.

The sale went well, and what art (that Uncle had made) that hadn't been claimed by family, was quickly snapped up by DEALERS. So posthumously Uncle may be somewhat famous, even if just locally. He taught art for nearly 30 years in various Milwaukee High Schools. I don't think he appreciated his own work very much at all . . . like many artists, we look at our own work, and see where it's not quite right . . . and look at the work of others and see mostly what's good about it. (For example, I'm still really tickled to see some of my drawings in print, or when I sell a piece, or get strongly positive feedback on it.)

Eventually I'll be putting some of the left over stuff from the estate up on Ebay. If anyone is interested in Depression Glass or porcelain from Occupied Japan email me or drop me a line. (trinlay63@wi.rr.com) I haven't even photographed any of it yet.

All the over doing it, and stress triggered a fibromyalgia flare up, and now it looks like I might also have arthritis on top of it all.

KT is learning how to drive, and should be ready for her road test in September or October. I'm looking forward to having her drive ME places. :)

If anyone out there knows Lisa Mason, Milwaukee fan and librarian, she is currently fighting breast cancer. This week was her last round of chemo, and depending on her tests this week, they'll soon be starting radiation therapy on her. Any prayers or well wishings in her direction would surely be appreciated.

Please pass the following along. (Don't forward anymore if it's after July 4 of 07) Hopefully it will inspire folks to get their annual tests and exams, even if they think it doesn't really matter for them. Some of my friends are also having health problems from the "too busy to go see the doctor" (or "too broke to see the doctor") syndrome delaying tests that should have been done earlier, or following up on little problems that have turned out to be signs of big problems.

I'm having (on top of the usual fibromyalgia) a year of abnormal test results, (re-testing and more coming soon.) Tests that came up normal a year ago (Mammogram and pap) are coming out abnormal/messed up this year. Yesterday I was back at the doctor for a biopsy, and I won't really know anything for 8-10 days.

It's scary how quickly these things can sneak up on a person. I really didn't realize how important these "stupid annual tests" are until mine came up abnormal. I thought because I didn't have a family history for those cancers it didn't really matter . . .

In any case, I thought that maybe we all need

a heads up health wise, and a reminder to get ourselves checked out at least annually:

http://www.thehpvtest.com/30plus/choose_to_know_bracelet.aspx

https://www.maketheconnection.org/order_bracelet/

http://www.komen.org/intradoc/cgi/idc.cgi_isapi.dll?IdcService=SS_GET_PAGE&nodeId=298

(The second link has a free bracelet kit, each order gets a \$1 donation from MERCK to support cervical cancer research. They've promised to donate to match the # of bracelet kits given out. So even if you won't use the bracelet kit, order one, and pass it along to someone who will. They can also be reached by phone at 888-447-8266)

Now back to the regularly scheduled LOC. (Thursday this week I'm going for further tests to find out if I need to worry or not. I'm also waiting to see if I can get coverage through the state's GAMP.)

I have my disability hearing coming up later in July, hopefully that will go well.

re: Monarchist news- Archduke Dominic of Austria-Hungary could just as well telecommute? (Presuming he enjoys architecture work and/or the income.)

Dragon w/one O- Do any of these books bring up the expense of the feeding and general care of a large sapient saurian? It seems that the environmental impact of a dragon only comes up in stories where the dragon is the problem to be solved. (The impact on herds and the maiden population.) They're very big and carnivorous, so how does this relationship with humans even occur? (Pern eventually gets around to explaining it.) They're so cute when they're babies?

Yes, Novik frequently touches on the problems of feeding the dragons. At one point Temeraire has to live on camel meat. He's not flying ten thousand miles to smoke a camel.

Rural King: I've seen some of those Toobs @ the local surviving 5 & dime: Winkies. When I manage to go out that way it's usually for art supplies, which they carry in limited supply, but often have in sorts or colors not carried elsewhere. They have some unusual kitchen tools as well.

Inkheart sounds like fun, particularly since it seems to compare well to *Princess Bride*. We'll have to hunt it down.

Joy of High Tech — Oddly enough I've seen something on the restoration of cast iron buildings in New York. PBS or the Discovery channel probably. I have an amulet made of meteorite metal, it's rather tiny and cast into a Bodhisattva (Avalokitesvara).

In parts of the world blacksmithing is associated with magic/sorcery. (Iron smiths in Africa and weapon smiths in Japan in particular

come to mind.)

I recall reading about the Coelacanth as a kid & being quite mesmerized by the idea of a living fossil. I think at that same age I was also a big fan of dinosaurs.

Brad Foster: We'd love to see a photo of Duffy and her fannish cat wings. You might also want to send such a photo to cuteoverload.com (It's addictive, I try to check it every day . . . just for a cute boost.)

Sheryl: I took your LOC to the vet with us. They've been doing the injection to the leg anyway for a long time, and it turns out they use the same version of the vaccine that you recommended and have been for some time. She cried all the way there in the car, I suppose she realized that we weren't going visiting, since Uncle passed away in February. She was not a very good girl at the vet this time, she even ended up Yeowling and trying to bite the vet. I think she prefers the female vet to the male one. On the way home though she forgave me for her bruised dignity and is wearing her new licence tag with pride. It matches her eyes. :)

Joe re cmt Jan: I think the idea is to wrap the cat in said towel and then slipping the blintz cat into the carrier.

Jan I thought I WAS thinking of Morgaine's sidekick — It's been a long time since I read the books, and easy to scramble names in my memory. It's not what it used to be.

I suspect a "cat whisperer" would mostly say that we just need to love and accept them on their own terms. Cats are trainable but often there is the element of "I'll do that IF I want to . . ." I know Megumi loves me, I don't need her to fetch or do tricks or come just because I call her. But sometimes she'll do all those things.

Dogs have owners, Cats have staff.

I ended up with seasons 1-3 on DVD of Samurai Jack as a birthday gift in late April. I'm waiting semi patiently for season 4 to come out.

I finally got a look at the box for "The Tale Of Genji" videogame, IMHO it should be called the "Tale of Yoshitsune" to avoid confusion w/ the other 'Genji'. (The Heian era Genji had the name as a personal nickname. Yoshitsune would be more like "Prince of the Genji" as it was a nickname for the clan of which he was leader though nearly it's sole survivor.)

Robert L: Sorry the Sam's club idea didn't work out for you. He's in Indiana, I'm in Wisconsin. My local Sam's doesn't do oil changes, it turns out the best deal locally is Midas.

Rodney: Yes Elric enjoyed going to visit Uncle. Any heaven that wouldn't take dogs, ferrets, cats or other beloved beasts is no heaven. (Remember the old "Twilight Zone" episode with the old hillbilly and his hound?) I'm doing OK really. Yeah, I'm admittedly one of those strange people who finds deep companionship in animals, and I anthropomorphize all over the place. :) That's what I get for watching things like Lassie on TV as a small child. You'd be horrified to know that not only does Megumi sleep on the bed, she sometimes hogs it. How a 7.5# cat can take up so much space is a mystery. :) I've found her not only alllll streeaaached out to take as much space

as possible, but also under the covers with her head on the pillow. I'm not sure she realizes she's a cat. :)

There were times I would wake up lying on my side on the edge of the bed. Sulla would be sleeping up against the small of my back. And then there's Lisa's dream about the furry quicksand . . .

Robert K- re United 93 . . . For me at least, this event is too fresh and painful to want to see or study even through the movies just yet. I don't think it's a 40's market at the movies anymore. With tickets going for around \$8 people are looking for entertainment rather than education. The movie would probably reach a larger audience as a televised event. Lately cash is tight for me anyway: (Health concerns and no Insurance at this point). If I see any movie, it's because friends have called and said "We're going to see _____? Would you like to come along?" Even then it's likely to wait till it hits the 2nd run discount theaters.)

I will hopefully have some new art to send out soon, but I haven't been doodling so much these days. I've been busy knitting away.

From: **Martin Morse Wooster** July 13, 2006
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Many thanks for *Alexiad 27*. I know you've given a short explanation in private, but could you explain how "Dominic von Habsburg" is related to the real Habsburgs and how he gets to be called an archduke? I thought the only archdukes and archduchesses were the direct heirs to the imperial throne of Austria.

Dominic is the great-grandson of Archduke Leopold, the next-to-last Grand Duke of Tuscany. Leopold was the grandson of Leopold, later Holy Roman Emperor, son of Franz I and Maria Theresa. All male descendants of Franz I and Maria Theresa and their children are Archdukes (or Archduchesses) unless they renounce the title or descend from one who did.

Robert Kennedy: Boondoggles can sometimes indeed be useful. I took the Baltimore light rail to get to Balticon this year. The trip was slow but pleasant and cheap. The light rail is certainly efficient for what it is, but there are probably cheaper and less tax-draining ways to accomplish similar mass transit goals, such as having dedicated bus lanes in an existing highway. I enjoy riding the Baltimore light rail, and much of the trip goes through pretty country, but the project is still a boondoggle.

Johnny Carruthers raises interesting points about the latest fall of *Amazing Stories*. I never saw *Amazing* during its Paizo Publishing incarnation, which shows you how lousy its

distribution was. I agree that someone will resurrect this title eventually, but it probably won't be Dell or Sovereign. I think the failure of *Science Fiction Age* — the most successful startup sf magazine in many years — has made Sovereign wary of adding another sf magazine to their portfolio. And I get the sense that *Asimov's* and *Analog* are limping along, somewhat profitable but not big money makers like the Dell crossword puzzle magazines. Wildside might be able to publish *Amazing* if their portfolio isn't already overextended (I think they have eight magazines). DNA seems to be in serious financial trouble, with *Science Fiction Chronicle* skipping issues and their other magazines not publishing at all.

Rodney Leighton brings up the issue of DUFF and TAFF reports. I believe none of the American TAFF winners have, in fact, written a report. Some may have published bits and pieces in places, but no one has done so. (And with those 200-pound airfares, why should they? England's not as exotic a place as it was in the 1950s.) Two British TAFF winners have published TAFF reports — James Bacon's *Worldconicon*, which was quite good, and Tobes Valois's "report," which actually consisted of other people interviewing Tobes and getting pretty inarticulate answers. The only DUFF report I know about from recent years is Janice Gelb's. I remember that Gelb said that the DUFF money enabled her to travel first class on a trip she otherwise would have made anyway in coach, but hey, *she wrote a report* — which is more than most have done.

Martin Tudor did also; but he had to pay for his own trip, Abi Frost the previous winner having spent the money she raised and then discovered that All Fandom was plotting against her. I think she made maybe one restitution payment.

— JTM

From: **Robert S. Kennedy** July 18, 2006
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Thank you for Vol. 5, No. 3.

On July 11, 2006, the Los Angeles *Daily News* Obituaries printed that a woman was born on July 8, 9126 and died on July 5, 2006. A typographical error? Maybe.

See H. Beam Piper's "Flight from Tomorrow" (1950), one of the many works by him now available on the Gutenberg web site:

<http://www.gutenberg.org/browse/authors/p>

I hope the woman wasn't too radioactive.

For the 6th time I was the only person in a movie theater. This time was a real surprise as the movie was *X-Men: The Last Stand*.

I would like to recommend a movie—*The Lost City*. Yes, I know that it has nothing to do with SF. To say that it is about Cuba is an understatement. If you can't see it in a theater, then rent it when it is available. On my scale of 1-5, I gave it a 5+.

The Carpet Makers by Andreas Eschbach (2005 for the English translation)—I found an old note to myself to obtain this novel and did so from the library. It's outstanding and I recommend it highly. Orson Scott Card had it translated from the German to English by Doryl Jensen and it appears to be an excellent translation. I only had one problem and that's when one of the characters used the expression "over and out" which is incorrect radio usage.

Engaging the Enemy by Elizabeth Moon (2006)—I have read most of the novels by Elizabeth Moon. Like **E. B. Frohvet** said in his review of the two prior novels in this series (Vol. 5, No. 2, p. 12), I too enjoy Moon's military SF. I can hardly wait for the next book in the series. For anyone who enjoys Moon's novels and has read the two prior novels in this series, this book is a must.

A number of weeks ago there was a report that Oxford Ancestors had informed a Florida man that DNA testing indicated he had a signature quite close to that of Genghis Khan's. That was incredible news. On June 21, 2006, the Los Angeles Daily News reported that the man was suspicious because his male ancestors were British. He had another test done by Family Tree DNA with the result that he had no connection to Genghis Kahn. One of the tests must be wrong. If the second DNA test is accurate it, then it is a serious black eye for the accuracy of Oxford Ancestors. Some of you may remember that a few years ago I had DNA tests done by Oxford Ancestors and they appear to be accurate. Also, Bryan Sykes the author of *The Seven Daughters of Eve* (2001) is connected to Oxford Ancestors. (I have the book and it is outstanding. The book was reviewed by Joe.) This apparent DNA testing failure could put a big question mark on the accuracy of DNA testing. Not a happy thing to happen.

Several weeks ago the History Channel had two excellent programs. First was *The Templar Code* which had good coverage of *The Knights Templar*. Second was *Mysteries of the Freemasons: The Beginning of America*. I purchased both DVD's so as to have the presentations without the breaks. In the one about the Freemasons, S. Brent Morris, Ph.D. makes numerous appearances. Joe previously made mention of Morris in relation to The Twenty-Fifth Sherlock Holmes/Arthur Conan Doyle Symposium. As did Joe, the program refers to Morris as a Masonic Historian. No mention that Morris is 33° GC [Grand Cross] Scottish Rite.

Other appearances were made by Dan Burstein (editor of *Secrets of the Code* [that's *The Da Vinci Code*]), Christopher Knight (co-author of *The Hiram Key*), David Shugarts (author of *Secrets of the Widows Son* that attempts to guess what Dan Brown might have in his next book that will be about the

Freemasons), and Stuart Beattie who is the Director of the Rosslyn Chapel. The program included excellent coverage of the connection of the Knights Templar to the Freemasons. It was a bit off concerning the 33° by not mentioning that there are two levels. One is the Honorary 33° and the other is the Active 33°. Also, they made mention of George Washington's wife, son, and daughter. As is well known, George Washington did not have any children. They would have been his wife's children by her prior marriage. For anyone interested in the Knights Templar and/or the Freemasons, I highly recommend both programs.

Washington's wife's son was a paternal ancestor of Mary Lee. Mary's mother was a relative of mine, which is why I was so upset by what the AWB did at Lee's inauguration in The Guns of the South.

In addition to the TV programs mentioned previously, as a result of my regular programs being on vacation I've started watching *Numbers*. My reason for watching it the first time was that it concerned Indians trying to cover up the fact that there were other people here along with, or prior to, the Indians.

I would like to add my recommendations for the following books reviewed by Joe: *SPIN* by Robert Charles Wilson (p. 8); *Old Man's War* (p. 9) and *The Ghost Brigades* (p. 10) by John Scalzi (as Joe knows, I nominated *Old Man's War* for a HUGO and Scalzi for the Campbell Award.); *The True Stella Awards* by Randy Cassingham (p. 13); and *The Force of Reason* by Oriana Fallaci (p. 14). Fallaci does her own translating from her home language of Italian into English. Oriana Fallaci is one of my heroines.

From the library I've ordered *The Three-Pound Enigma* (p. 17) reviewed by Jim Sullivan.

Now, I'd like to put in a very strong recommendation for *One Nation Under Therapy* reviewed by Joe (p. 13). For a number of years I have wondered about the "Trauma Counselors/Crisis Therapists/Trauma Specialists" who seem to appear out of the woodwork and descend like locusts whenever there is some crisis/disaster, real or imagined. How did people survive before they came into existence? It's psychological intervention whether it's desired or not. The authors call it "therapism". Special attention should be given to Chapter 6—"September 11, 2001: The Mental Health Crisis That Wasn't".

A&E has an excellent program—"Cold Case Files"—that is the real thing and not what appears on CBS. The cases usually appear in 30 minute segments, but can be shorter or longer. On July 1 *A&E* presented the case of Michael Crowe. In January 1998 in Escondido, California, 12 year old Stephanie Crowe was murdered during the night and the police were sure that her brother 14 year old Michael was the killer. Police officers browbeat, harassed, threatened, and lied to Michael. Under extreme

pressure Michael confessed just so that the police would stop coercing him. Two of Michael's friends were also charged. It became obvious to any reasonable person that Michael and his friends were innocent and that another person was the prime suspect. The police involved, however, ignored the prime suspect. Later, one good Escondido police officer picked up the case and became convinced that Michael and his friends were innocent and of the identity of the real murderer. He put his own job in jeopardy by following the case. Fellow police officers told him to back off. The District Attorney refused to review the case. Finally, the California Attorney General's office took over the case and the real murder was convicted. My conclusion is that the police officers involved and the District Attorney should have been sent to prison. If this case interests you, do a Google search which will come up with a lot of sites.

Janice G. Stinson: Yes, of course I meant Basal Cell Carcinoma and not Basil Cell. It's an excellent example of the problem of becoming sloppy and dependent on Spell-Check. Basil is quite upset that I would consider him to be a carcinoma in need of excision. ☺

Joy V. Smith: You're welcome.

Trinlay Khadro: Thank you. My condolences to you on the loss of your uncle.

Sheryl Birkhead: Thank you.

Rodney Leighton: Thank you.

Joseph T Major: I mentioned "Marrs" because I knew that you would pick up on it and hopefully make some comment about Texe Marrs. A number of years ago I purchased a couple of books from Texe to see what he was about. Periodically, I receive mailings from him. The latest concerns, among other items, his newest book, *CODEX MAGICA: Secret Signs, Mysterious Symbols, and Hidden Codes of the Illuminati*. The man is either a wacko or a fraud. I'm not sure which, maybe something of both. He has been publishing for years which means that there must be people who believe his crap.

There is another Marrs out there—Jim Marrs. He appears to be into conspiracies, UFO's, and alien visitation. I don't know if Jim and Texe are related or not.

Personally I enjoyed *The Da Vinci Code*, both the novel and the movie.

Taras Wolansky: Cecil B. Currey, Ph.D., the author of *Code Number 72/Ben Franklin: Patriot of Spy?* (1972, Prentice-Hall, Inc.), was "a Professor of Early American History and Culture at the University of South Florida and a Benjamin Franklin Scholar." He also authored another book on Franklin—*Road to Revolution: Benjamin Franklin in England, 1765-1775* (1968). (In this book he refers to Franklin as America's Leonardo Da Vinci.) I found some eight books by Currey at the University of California. The latest one was 1999. This is all I know about Currey and I don't know if he is still alive or not. Anyway, neither he, nor *Code Number 72*, is a joke. My impression is that Currey presents Benjamin Franklin as the man and not the myth.

Currey also wrote Edward

Lansdale: *The Unquiet American* (1998) and *Victory At Any Cost: The Genius of Vietnam's General Vo Nguyen Giap* (1997), and the website for the latter speaks of him in the present tense. The book Edward Lansdale was denounced by L. Fletcher Prouty, which is a pretty good recommendation.

— JTM

Lloyd G. Daub: OK Lloyd, send something that Joe can publish so that you don't always appear as WAHF.

From: **Sheryl Birkhead** July 15, 2006
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As I imagine you have heard, *Barbaro's* prognosis has been changing on a daily basis and no one can say what will be happening even in the near future, let alone the longer term. It is small consolation that all the occurrences were things that had been covered and the best possible treatments undertaken to try to avoid things such as the laminitis. We shall see.

We have lost *Jim Baen* and *rich brown* — the list for *LA* grows.

Ah, I can see I miss out even more buy not having cable — don't know much at all about the series *Rome*. You can't get the same warm fuzzy feeling from a synopsis as you can from actually seeing a series — yeah . . . RSN.

Schirm's style continues to evolve — nice.

Lisa: congratulations on becoming the proud owner of a Toob armadillo — sounds as if your menageries are fairly extensive. I also have a collection of Pocket Dragons (by Texas artist *Real Musgrave* who is retiring this fall, I believe) — in my lawyer's bookcase. I actually have duplicates of some since a friend bought them and then left them to me. I have not really bought them in quite a few years-but was just looking at a few of the pocket dragon websites and was floored to see that the first one I bought (and promptly broke a toe off the clawed chair in transporting it home from Texas) — and which I also have the friend's duplicate — is selling for anything up to about \$2500. I have already told my sister not the think that shelf of figures is merely *el cheapo* cute figurines, just so they never get sold off 2/\$1.

I'd like to see *Real Musgrave* on a panel with the astronaut *Story Musgrave*.

Ah — I have never heard of the *Akhal- Teke* — I need to see about remedying that. I would think that, as desert bred, they would tend to be small — with small surface area (but, ahem . . . camels . . . ?) — but if they would handle dressage they have to be heavily muscled--again, need to go look and see what I can find.

Does the *Reese's* cereal taste like the candy? . . . well, you know what I mean. I was not all tempted to try the caramel-added (was tempted to say caramelized, but that is a totally different

situation) cup and even less interested in the **white** (yeech) chocolate formulation. Lately, in an attempt to kick (or at least gently nudge) the chocolate habit, I have been indulging in one miniature of the extra dark (60%) Hershey's chocolate a day. Because I do not care for the dark chocolate, I am hoping to substitute one for the other .. but on a lesser scale (and then at some nebulous point find the milk chocolate too sweet — yeah . . . sure . . .) an uphill battle it truly WAS. I really liked the tiny model of the robot and had vague ponderings over where it might end up . . . on eBay perhaps?

Trinlay — FYI just yesterday I got a news release in the mail from *Intervet* promoting their new (the first as far as I know) licensed 3 year feline distemper vaccine. Most of us just use the yearly one — but triennially in most cases. I would not let this influence me to change manufacturers just because of the one vaccine — but it is a portent of things to come. While manufacturers may believe (as do we as practitioners) that the vaccines are best used this way — it takes at least a three year study and challenge to show that the 3 year (which may actually be identical to the annual formulation) interval is effective. I can only hope that more manufactures are actually already running these tests. If I did not say it before — I believe you can find the vaccination guidelines from the American Assoc. of Feline Practitioners at www.aafponline.org.

Personally, I think both *TAFF* and *DUFF* should remain as funds. I admit that I did ask, once upon a time, one fund winner what actually ended up coming out of the pocket and was told to allot about \$1000. So, even with all the subsidy that goes on, if you are truly strapped for funds, even a win might not make it actually an affordable trip. I admit that I have no idea what any other winners had to cover from their own funds — and of course the destination and length of stay all affect the bottomline, but I still feel they have a place — if onlyforfanish feelings if nothing else.

Still mucked it up with my scrawl—*adjuvant* is the term — we'll get there eventually! And my brother turned on the A/C — so I hope the typing is a better (or at least more accurate) read . . .

This is being typed on an old used laptop — a Mac (called a Wallstreet) that I got on eBay for my price — then promptly doubled what I spent when I broke it — yeah, my fault — but the directions on how to add RAM seemed so easy. Indeed, the RAM addition was easy — but I was so eager to get it put back together to see if I had done it right that I jammed the keyboard in improperly and then managed to destroy two keys trying to remove it and . . . but you get the idea. So, now I can type while away from the desk — aha a tech typer — the more things change the more they stay the same . . . just more expensive.

I think Rodney ought to go for the electronic fanzine, but since I do not frequent zine sites, I doubt I'd be reading it. Wonder if he has been an apa-hack? For what it is worth, my mother had a plethora of ministrokes that went undiagnosed because it looked like Alzheimer's

— and during the workup for that it was (last test run, of course) found that the carotids were almost totally occluded — and **that** was the root cause of the strokes — but by then she had lost so much weight that she was no longer a surgical candidate. I took this to “heart” — since her cholesterol had always actually been low — and last year started having a carotid Doppler test done — and paying for it myself since my physician does not see any reason to run it. They rate the results from normal to see a doctor now — and I rated one step down from normal — so some changes, but not serious . . . at least not yet.

My niece is having health problems; numbness on her left side. She is taking medicine for multiple sclerosis but the doctor is not ruling out a stroke. I asked her if she had such a test and she said she had low choleresitol, so there wasn't any need.

I'm sure there is a list somewhere of the *TAFF* winners who have written their trip reports — and I have tried to get most of them, but while they say they will write one, there is no stick to offset the carrot of the trip. I think that most fen want to write a report, but quite often life just gets in the way. Many of them seem to get things done with prodding and, if I remember correctly, several have done unconventional reports (such as slideshows at conventions).

I have given up on getting any response from *LA* — so much for needing to work up any fillos — maybe I can spend more time trying to get ideas for the pastels . . . Japan has not been interested — to date, so it looks as if I'll have another year not to try to come up with PR pieces!

Henry(Welch) I am told that Australia licorice is the very best. If I remember correctly, the local *Trader Joe's* (and hence all the stores in the chain I presume) sells some, so there must be interest.

Ah — *Bon Ami* — their logo is a chick and the slogan (checked the can I have in the kitchen) — “Hasn't scratched yet”. Wonder how many people know what it means??

I'd like to see *Lloyd Daub* pub a zine.

You know he did, many aeons ago, *MSFire*. It was a clubzine and he did many good things in it. *Lloyd & the gang*, your audience awaits you!

— JTM

Thanks for this!

From: **Sue Burke** July 21, 2006
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I survived the World Cup, the soccer extravaganza comparable to the Superbowl

except it lasts longer, involves the whole world, and serves up greater bombast. In spite of that, Americans aren't crazy about soccer.

Much time was wasted on pseudo-psychological analysis to guess why. The BBC announcers joked that Americans only like to play games where they get to make up and enforce the rules. I think the quality of BBC announcers has taken a nosedive; they no longer know history.

Soccer isn't as popular in the USA because it's a relatively recent sport. The USA developed sports fever before most of Europe and was busy with baseball, hockey, football, auto racing, horse racing, and even basketball before soccer began to spread outside of Britain; the first baseball World Series was in 1882, but the first soccer World Cup was in 1930. There simply wasn't room in the American fan calendar for another spectator sport. But in the rest of the world, soccer is often the only big-time pro sport there is, so it achieves popularity by monopoly.

I'm sorry, we were too busy worrying about Barbaro's leg and sorry he and Bernadini hadn't been in all three races; that would have been another Affirmed-Alydar confrontation!

A Spanish commentator offered another possibility: the unpredictability of soccer. In baseball, football, and basketball, the best team usually wins. But in soccer, too much depends on luck and referee calls. Too often the best team does not win. "For the American mentality, educated in the strict meritocracy of pioneer Protestants for whom success is always the fruit of personal effort," he wrote, "this is depressing." One more possibility: soccer, though it is called "the beautiful game," really isn't as exciting as baseball, with its dramatic pitcher-batter duels, or football, with its explosions of action at every scrimmage. Soccer is interesting, but without the do-or-die plays and, even more importantly, the regular pauses that allow viewers to make kitchen and bathroom expeditions. Rarely does soccer offer the climax of the final two minutes of a football game, intentionally designed to be riveting. Americans don't just like excitement, we make excitement.

The USA, with two losses and one tie, finished 25th out of 32 teams, between Tunisia and Iran. Spain finished 9th and won the Fair Play Trophy. Neither of the two finalist teams, France and Italy, came close to deserving that title. French player Zinedine Zidane won the Best Player Trophy, even though his head butt of an Italian player got him thrown out of the final game and was his last act as a player, since he retired as planned after the World Cup. He will have to perform three days of community service as a penalty.

The next World Cup will be in 2010 in South Africa. In August in Spain, almost everyone goes on vacation, many for the whole month, and most of them to the beach. My husband and I will be here at home. He plans to study for a test of Spanish fluency, and I will be

reading and writing. We will be enjoying the peace and quiet of Madrid where, in the middle of the month, half the population is out of town. Tourists try to fill the vacuum, but most of them wind up at the beach, too. Watch out for the stinging jellyfish and the biting bluefish on the Mediterranean coast.

From: **Milt Stevens** July 20, 2006
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I particularly noticed the list of choices for best novel in the Hugo competition in *Alexiad* V5#3. It isn't actually signed which probably means it is by Joseph. However, getting the title wrong on the George R. R. Martin nominee doesn't sound like a mistake Joseph would make.

Unfortunately I did. As I said, I couldn't bring myself to even get the book, much less read it.

— JTM

From: **Taras Wolansky** July 31, 2006
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Reading the June, 2006, *Alexiad*, I wonder about the extent to which fandom is like a family.

A lot of the material is the kind of stuff I occasionally get from relatives; people's health, and so on. I must confess, I'm only moderately interested in this kind of material even when it is actually from my real, biological relatives.

Null-ABC by H. Beam Piper? Is this an unpublished work, or would I know it under another title? If the former, I'm surprised it was overlooked, during the Piper fad of the 1980s.

Nope. Astounding, February-March 1953, by Piper and John J. McGuire.

"Since Darkover has blizzards in summer, how come it isn't completely glaciated?" My impression was the blizzards were in the mountains. In any case, the snow has to build up from year to year, for glaciers to form.

Review of Robert Charles Wilson's *Spin*: **"Wilson portrays the gradual eroding of humanity's reserves of order, so to speak, under an unprecedented and cosmic stress."** I don't get it. Why would a hyperspace bubble around the entire Earth have this kind of effect?

John Scalzi's *Old Man's War* **"lacks the drive of [Starship Troopers] and the malice of [The Forever War]"**. Well put. It's also less well-written than either of its models. I was disappointed.

The description of Kenneth Oppel's *Airborn* and *Skybreaker* reminded me of Hayao Miyazaki's classic animated movie, *Island in the Sky* (a.k.a. *Laputa*), with its world of great flying machines. Anime is something of an

underground influence on SF; for example, *Babylon 5* retells large sections of the more profound *Legend of Galactic Heroes*.

Speaking of influences, parts of Naomi Novik's excellent *Throne of Jade* reminded me of the fierce, Afghan battles of M.M. Kaye's romance, *The Far Pavilions*. Working her analogy with sailing ships, I think Novik misses the point that a great captain need not be a great sailor: he has a sailing master for that. So she imagines that women have to be made captains in the Royal Dragon Navy (or whatever it's called) because certain breeds of dragon will bond only with females. More realistically, in such cases the captain would be a man, the pilot, a woman.

After seeing Novik on panels at Lunacon, I worried that the Temeraire trilogy would be too PC to enjoy, but happily this turned out not to be the case. Though I've not yet read the third book.

"I never saw an anarcho-capitalist explain how the free-market system of law enforcement would cope with sharia." I don't follow; how would this differ from dealing with a criminal gang or enemy state?

Because anarcho-capitalism assumes a uniform legal system coming about through a version of the market, and sharia works differently. "We have proof that your clients raped our client." "Oh, under our laws she was a whore and deserved it."

Alexis Gilliland: I think you're right. If Judas did what the "Gospel of Judas" says he did, he wouldn't have written the Gospel and spoiled his effect. Of course, in a sense, his actions were part of the plan, raising questions of free will vs. determinism. Then again, it didn't really matter to the plan just how the authorities got their hands on Jesus.

E.B. Frohvet: **"The American military avoided bombing Hiroshima with conventional weapons, as they wanted a 'clean' target for assessing the effect of the atomic bomb."** This strikes me as implausible: how could they know in advance that such a weapon would exist, and that they would be using it against Japan? Instead, one of the factors that helped push Hiroshima to the top of the list was that it hadn't been already bombed. Another was that there was no POW camp there.

Martin Morse Wooster: All the big name actors who worked in *Crash* for a share of the profits are being screwed, it appears.

Paul Haggis should have had the character buy a gun on the black market, not in a gun store subject to waiting periods. Maybe he needed some liberal brownie points; the movie diverges from PC orthodoxy in some respects.

Trinlay Khadro: Xena is a fictional character; Mulan's existence, more than 1500 years ago, is also hazy. The 12th century female samurai, Tomoe Gozen, is better attested; presumably she was way off at the end of the bell curve. Of course, firearms made battlefields somewhat "friendlier" to women.

Janice Stinson: If the Worldcon supporting membership were ten bucks, we would have a bigger problem than we already do with people buying multiple memberships to nominate and vote for an unworthy Hugo candidate.

Like The Guardsman.

— JTM

From: **AL du Pisani** August 1, 2006
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Thank you for sending *Alexiad*. It makes me feel a bit wanted in the world. A good thing, as I am feeling a bit unwanted right now.

E.B. Frohvet's review of *A Fish Caught in Time* was especially apt, as I have an interest in the story of the Coelacanth. Especially the South African connections. After the initial discovery, the story has been moving away from South Africa. Recently, it has been moving back. A couple of years ago a breeding colony of Coelacanths was found off the SA coast. In waters about 100 metres shallower than any other place they have been found. Which may call into question some of the accepted knowledge of the Coelacanth.

I did not plan to take leave, although I knew that I was in need of a break. But then the job I was chasing was in a company that was postponing hiring people, and I found myself with two weeks available. So I went on holiday to my family in the Northern Cape.

I managed to rest, and rebuild some relationships. But every time I finish a visit to the Northern Cape, I despair of my country. Part of it is the road. It is terrible, especially the parts between Wolmaranstad and Christiana, where the roads are full of filled pot-holes, and with a couple of places where the tar disappears. Part of it is hearing about a community where too many people have given up hope that voting will bring a better life. And the businesses are dying.

Once I got back, the job I was chasing evaporated, as in the company may have closed down and is not returning my calls. I still have one more prospect, but it is at least two months away from anything. Almost makes me want to give up the search. But I have been too unhappy for too long for the status quo to continue.

In South African news, Jacob Zuma continues to make headlines. It seems that he has gone in for the "All publicity is good, as long as they spell my name right" school. At least one other candidate may have emerged from the shadows, making his attempt at becoming the next President of the ANC, at their meeting early next year. (When Thabo Mbeki reaches his term limits. President of the ANC is generally regarded as automatically becoming the next President of the country, once an election is held.)

But, this is Africa, and things are not as straightforward as in some other parts of the world. See, once you have made it known that you are interested in the top ANC job, you move back into the shadows, after claiming that you are not really interested in the job, but will

accept the will of the Party. And then everything happens behind the scenes. Which frustrates political analysts, commentators and journalists no end.

One of the major problems we have been dealing with in SA, is the matter of Crime. Which is not as simple as it seems, since part and parcel of crime is a political dimension. One of the previous big wigs in the Police has been stating that to fight crime, four processes are necessary: Laws (promulgated by the Government and accepted by the People), the Criminal Justice system (Police force, courts system and prisons), the Economy and Values.

Laws have been problematic. Not only because in some instances the Government have been hell bent on making sure that their vision of utopia sticks, but because so many laws have been hampered by bad execution.

Let me digress: A Opposition leader of the Apartheid years has recently published his political memoirs. In it he states that the corner stone of the Apartheid system, legally, was the Population Registration Act, which was supposed to put every South African into the right racial box. All other race related laws assumed that the Population Registration Act was working perfectly, and built on that foundation. Part of the reason Apartheid fell, was the the Population Registration Act worked only imperfectly. Once it was admitted that the foundation stone was cracked, the whole edifice of laws built on it fell.

And, he says, the current ANC government have followed the exact same procedure, with the Employment Equity Act as the cornerstone. (The Employment Equity Act tries to ensure that the employed reflects the racial composition of SA society, which means that Blacks and women tend to be given preference in hiring.) And he sees that this system too shall fail, in the exact same way and for the exact same reasons as the Apartheid.

The South African criminal justice system is somewhat of a joke. The courts have enormous difficulty in prosecuting crimes, and too often evidence are "lost". The Police are under enormous pressure, and some policemen are doing yeoman work. But others are just clock punchers. And, unfortunately, it is often the diligent that get killed in confrontations with criminals. Furthermore, too much resources the Police need are either not getting to them, or being wasted. Such as patrol cars being used to ferry policemen living long distances outside their precincts to and from work.

Welcome to modern America.

Going to private enterprise has its own difficulties: Because their union was angry with the Government's plans with regards to the railroads, security guards have been striking for two months. A violent strike: About 50 security guards working in defiance of the strike had been murdered during that time. The places that still had security guards, had them working in plain clothes, and keeping a low profile.

Strangely enough, the one part where the (communistic, socialistic) ANC has been doing

quite well has been the economy. The comment that one local commentator made is that it is a bad thing when the most efficient state department, and the best to deal with, is the tax man.

The last leg, that of Values, has been the most problematic. It took ten years for people to realise the South Africans do not seem to share common values. Or regards values as negotiable. The various churches have not been able to put a vision of shared unified values forward. Partly that is because of historical reasons, such as the support or not of Apartheid. Partly it has been due to disunity in intra church associations, such as the long delayed unity talks of the NG church family. (Which seems to have reached a couple of breakthroughs, recently.)

Some time ago, a black doctor dealing with AIDS patients decided that he cannot continue to treat symptoms of illnesses, but that he need to treat the root cause of it all: A lack of common values. (Since he is a Christian, his vision of the right values is Christian.) He got a group of supporters together, and they got funding (lots of funding) from a bank and some other civil institutions. They launched the Heartlines project: A series of eight one hour dramas, each looking at one common (Christian) value. These dramas are currently being broadcast on prime time television, and seem to be having an effect. The one thing I like about the dramas seen so far, is that there are no easy answers.

This has always been the issue with some of these type of shows: That the message is belaboured to death, and the situation is trite and predictable. These dramas are not. The issues are real and heavy issues, and the people in them have to deal with real problems: How do you forgive somebody who killed your child in a traffic accident?

You might want to get your hands on a copy of Simon Wiesenthal's *The Sunflower: On the Possibilities and Limits of Forgiveness* (1976).

— JTM

In two months time we might start to see a change in attitudes. Because we need a change in attitudes. And I may need to change my attitudes.

I really hope that we can South Africa right. Because I live for hope and a better future. One where some day I can visit the moon.

WAHF:

Lloyd Daub, with various items of interest.

We'd like to know how LA Con was for you.

THOUGHTS ON TIME TRAVEL

by Paul Gadzikowski



A MOVIE TRAILER

Whiteness.

Then there appears a man in an exquisite black suit, with a fine scarf from Bergdorf Goodman. This is TRUMAN CAPOTE (Philip Seymour Hoffman). He begins speaking, in his high mincing voice.

CAPOTE: After I finished my book on the Clutter murders, *In Cold Blood*, and became famous, I was at somewhat of a loss about what to do next. A correspondent from Washington suggested that I go into the business of that sort of investigation. If it meant writing for those *dreadful* publications with the pictures on the covers of half-naked women tied up and threatened, I would have passed, but Mr. Shawn was so very supportive. Then a friend of his suggested I look into the case of this doctor.

We see CAPOTE walking down a prison corridor, being carefully searched, and shown to a door.

GUARD: You be careful now. They don't call him "Hannibal the Cannibal" cause it's a neat rhyme.

CAPOTE: I've read the trial reports.

He enters the room. HANNIBAL LECTER (Anthony Hopkins) is in a smaller, clear cage inside the larger cell. CAPOTE stops, examines the scene, takes a breath, and walks to the chair and table which have been placed there.

CAPOTE (v.o.) It was difficult interviewing the man, but I persevered.

The cell again, with CAPOTE being lectured by LECTER:

LECTER: A census taker once tried to test me. I ate his liver with fava beans and a nice Chianti.

CAPOTE: Which one? It's so hard to get a decent Chianti these days. So much of it is the cheap wine they have in those *dreadful* faux-Italian restaurants.

LECTER seems taken aback.

CAPOTE (v.o.): Smith frightened me because he was me. This Lector . . . he's something else, something detached from the human race.

It is somewhat later. LECTER is leaning forward, as close as the bars will permit, hectoring, menacing:

LECTER: What possible reason could I have for co-operating with you?

CAPOTE: To have your story told. To have people know what it was that brought you here, brought you to this, what influenced you to be this way.

LECTER: You can't reduce me to a set of influences! You've given up good and evil for behaviorism, Mr. New Yorker Writer Capote — nothing is ever anybody's fault! Look at me, Mr. Capote! Can you say I'm evil? Am I evil, Mr. Capote?

Capote looks away, fumbles with his scarf, then gathers his wits.

CAPOTE: Yes. Yes, you are.

The scene fades to white, then black letters appear on the screen:

Anthony Hopkins Philip Seymour Hoffman

in cold lamb

Co-Editors: Lisa & Joseph Major
Co-Publishers: Joseph & Lisa Major
Writers, Staff: Major, Joseph & Major, Lisa

Art: What we are mainly looking for is small fillos. Your fillo will probably be scanned in and may be reused, unless you object to its reuse.

Contributions: This is not a fictionzine. It is intended to be our fanzine, so be interesting.

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